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Journalistic agency and the subjective turn in British foreign correspondent discourse

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Thesis submitted for the degree of PhD in Media Studies

2013

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Abstract

Journalistic agency and the subjective turn in British foreign correspondent discourse

The central question of this thesis is to find out and contextualize how British foreign correspondents demonstrate that their practices of reporting conflict, crises and trauma have been constituted. The empirical data collected is concerned with the content of how they articulate their work, placing more emphasis on what they say about their work rather than what their practice says about them. Journalistic activity in covering traumatic events comes up against institutional rules of 'objectivity', reporting even as their senses and bodies are filled with competing emotional responses.

The thesis is concerned with the complex agency of journalists and how they articulate their practice. The research questions look at how their practices are constituted as institutional 'rules of the game', such as objectivity, and as 'rules' outside the game, such as trauma, compassion and autobiography. All of these concepts have taxed the minds of media academics for a considerable time and the work is informed by theories of the mediation of suffering, morality, compassion, trauma and witnessing.

This research project draws on fourteen interviews with prominent British foreign correspondents and war correspondents from both press and television. The research methodology examines both qualitative semi-structured interviews and autobiographical texts.

The thesis broadly finds firstly that BBC TV foreign correspondents advocate the most emotional detachment between self and Other. Secondly, most press journalists advocate a more subjective deployment of emotion attached to truth, in order to witness conflicts in a more participatory fashion. The press journalists tend to reject the objective model on moral and political grounds. Life narratives in autobiographical literature reveal a complex of objective, personal, ethical, compassionate and traumatic concerns. The culmination of all the material makes a strong case for understanding foreign correspondence as complex agency, a space

of contradictory demands between institutional constraints, moral loyalties, emotional attachments and autobiographical influences.

Contents

LIST OF FIGURES	7
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	8
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION	10
1.1: RESEARCH QUESTION ONE	11
1.2: RESEARCH QUESTION TWO.....	13
1.3: RESEARCH QUESTION THREE.....	16
1.4: RESEARCH QUESTION FOUR.....	18
1.5: RESEARCH QUESTION FIVE	20
1.6: CONCLUSION.....	21
CHAPTER TWO: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	24
2.1: PREVIOUS WORK ON JOURNALISM AND JOURNALISTIC AGENCY.....	24
2.2: PRE-HABITUS JOURNALISTIC EXPERIENCE	30
2.3: JOURNALISTIC PRACTICE AS OBJECTIVITY.....	31
2.4: JOURNALISTIC TRAUMA	42
2.5: JOURNALISTIC ‘DISTANCE’, WITNESSING AND TIME	48
2.6: JOURNALISTIC COMPASSION.....	65
2.7: JOURNALISTIC AUTOBIOGRAPHY	79
2.8: COMPLEX AGENCY.....	85
CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY	89
3.1: LOCATION AND NUMBER OF INTERVIEWS.....	90
3.2: SNOWBALL TECHNIQUE AND INSTITUTIONAL ISSUES	91
3.3: OUTSIDER ISSUES.....	92
CHAPTER FOUR: INSTITUTIONAL ‘RULES OF THE GAME’	99
4.1: OBJECTIVITY.....	100
4.2: HISTORY AND EMOTION	120
4.3: UNCONSCIOUS EMOTION	127
4.4: FOREIGN CORRESPONDENT AS OUTSIDER.....	135
4.5: EMBEDDED JOURNALISM.....	140
4.6: CONCLUSION.....	142
CHAPTER FIVE: TRAUMA.....	146
5.1: JOURNALISM AND TRAUMA.....	146
5.2: WITNESSING	162
5.3: THE DART CENTRE FOR JOURNALISM AND TRAUMA	172
5.4: TIME	181
5.5: TRAUMA AND JOURNALISTIC PRACTICE.....	187
CHAPTER SIX: EMOTIONAL ATTACHMENTS.....	194
6.1: PARTIALITY AND PREJUDICE.....	195
6.2: SENSORY JOURNALISM	216
6.3: PARACHUTE JOURNALISM	236
6.4: EXPERIENCE	240
6.5: CELEBRITY JOURNALISTS	252
6.6: CONCLUSION.....	256

CHAPTER SEVEN: LIFE NARRATIVES.....	259
7.1: OTHER JOURNALISTIC RATIONALES FOR WRITING AUTOBIOGRAPHIES	259
7.2: INTERVIEWEE RATIONALES FOR WRITING AUTOBIOGRAPHIES	274
7.3: ANTHONY LOYD.....	282
7.4: JEREMY BOWEN	285
7.5: JON SNOW	290
7.6: FERGAL KEANE	296
7.7: JOHN SIMPSON.....	299
7.8: CONCLUSION.....	302
CHAPTER EIGHT: CONCLUSION	305
8.1: OBJECTIVITY AND EMOTION	305
8.2: TRAUMA	306
8.3: EMOTIONAL ATTACHMENTS	308
8.4: THE DIALECTICS OF EXPERIENCE	309
8.5: LIFE NARRATIVES.....	311
8.6: LIMITATIONS OF THIS RESEARCH AND FUTURE PROJECTS.....	312
APPENDICES	315
APPENDIX ONE: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL	315
APPENDIX TWO: INTERVIEWEE PROFILES	317
APPENDIX THREE: HISTORY OF NEWS PRODUCTION RESEARCH.....	320
BIBLIOGRAPHY	323

List of Figures

FIGURE 1: TRAUMA.....54

FIGURE 2: THE STORY144

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Chapter One: Introduction

This research project on journalistic agency and the subjective turn in elite British foreign correspondent discourse is interested in a particular set of constraints around partiality, those of emotion and human agency. It is assumed that without individual journalists, there is no news, so this project centres its enquiry on the human individual. It examines constraints on journalists' practices: objectivity, trauma, emotional attachments, moral loyalties, life narratives and influences, all from the points of view of journalists themselves.

I chose to focus on elite British foreign correspondents for two main reasons. The first is because they are powerful discursive claimants of what constitutes 'foreign', Other and 'outside'. They work beyond the simple geographical to influence political, moral and aesthetic spheres. Part of what I am interested in is how fourteen interview responses demonstrate that they internalize 'foreignness' or outsiderliness.

The second reason I chose to focus on elite journalists is that they possess huge aggregate power to influence public opinion in the English-speaking world, especially Britain. Four of the interviewees have worked for many years for the British Broadcasting Corporation, which is still held up as a model of radio and television news production excellence throughout the developed and developing world. Most of the respondents are heavily decorated with journalistic awards, making them highly regarded by their peers as consistent producers of authoritative commentary (Tester, 2001: 24), elite representatives of their profession. Many elite voices distinguish themselves by proclaiming the values of 'objectivity' (Bourdieu, 1998: 70). Objectivity practice, as explained below, is a key research question of this research.

The central question of this thesis is to find out and contextualize how British foreign correspondents demonstrate that their practices of reporting conflict, crises and trauma have been constituted. It starts by asking fourteen prominent British foreign correspondents, many of whom are publically recognized figures, some even internationally known, how their practices are constituted as institutional 'rules of the game', such as objectivity. It then goes on to ask them how their practices are constituted as more personal, moral and informal 'rules',

such as trauma, witnessing, compassion and autobiography, 'rules' that operate outside of the institutional game.

The research consists of both qualitative semi-structured interviews and analysis of autobiographical texts. Methodological issues such as location and number of interviews, snowball technique, institutional and outsider issues are considered at length in Chapter Three. The eighteen interview questions are listed in Appendix One: Interview Protocol.

The central research question subdivides into five major research questions, which ask how the interviews demonstrate that the foreign correspondents' practice is constituted through:

1. institutional 'rules of the game';
2. trauma;
3. 'distance', witnessing and time;
4. compassion;
5. autobiography.

Research question one is analytically addressed (comparing interview data with key theoretical literatures) in Chapter Four. Research questions two and three are analytically addressed in Chapter Five. Both chapters compare interview data with key theoretical literatures. Research questions four and five are analytically addressed in Chapters Six and Seven. Chapters Four to Seven constitute the core chapters of this thesis.

1.1: Research Question One

Objectivity is a key concept of this research project. In order to ascertain how the respondents constitute their practices of or resistances to objectivity, it was operationalized as an interview question to the fourteen respondents (Appendix 1: Interview Protocol, interview question 2). As a semi-structured interview question, this first question provided a springboard for the correspondents individually to constitute their experiences of objectivity in their

practices, as well as to talk about perceived differences from other elite institutional and independent foreign correspondents. Interview question two is theoretically framed in the next chapter.

Objectivity as a scientific Enlightenment ‘rule of the game’ persists as a problem for most media scholars. It constitutes a central debate in media studies. The contemporary ‘post-structural’ deconstruction of objectivity is arguably shifting the very discursive terrain of academic methodology and epistemology. Derrida writes:

‘Deconstruction takes place, it is an event that does not wait the deliberation, consciousness, or organization of a subject, or even of modernity. *It deconstructs itself. It can be deconstructed* [Ca se deconstruit]’. (2002: 4)

Foreign correspondent discourse is constituted by multiple, competing interpretations of inside-outside agency. I want to test whether inside-outside relations in British foreign correspondent discourse are always already ‘in’ deconstruction, by examining and contextualizing the interfaces of objective agencies with political and subjective ones. I recognize that deconstruction, if it takes place, does so beyond my organization as a subject and beyond the respondents’ organizations as subjects. So, that is why it is important that I adhere to two key methodological strategies: to allow the respondents’ voices to speak for themselves and to stand back from their voices as much as possible to see what, if anything, is ‘in’ deconstruction in elite British foreign correspondent discourse. How does the contextualization of fourteen interviews demonstrate that their objective practice is constituted in terms of inside-outside relations?

This research project will explore whether the core institutional rule of the journalistic game, that of objectivity, is recognized as being as problematic for British foreign correspondents as it is for media scholars; and/or whether it is also undergoing professional transformation and/or re-evaluation. Bourdieu’s formulation of institutional ‘rules of the game’, developed in Chapter Four, will be critically applied to the interview findings that demonstrate how the respondents’ practice was constituted through institutional ‘rules of the game’, through

objectivity in particular. Journalistic practice as objectivity forms the first major debate outlined in the next chapter, 'Theoretical Framework' (see 2.3).

The next four research questions move outside the formal, institutional 'rules of the game'.

1.2: Research Question Two

I am particularly interested in constraints on foreign correspondent constraints and interruptions in their practice of reporting conflict and trauma, which is why the second major research question asks how elite British foreign correspondents constitute trauma in the process of reporting extreme human suffering? Trauma¹, from an objective perspective, is a medical and biological phenomenon, a recognizable set of mental and physical symptoms that does not account for the individual, subjective experience of trauma. I investigate journalistic trauma because it is a critical concept of emotional discourse pertaining to reporting war, crisis and conflict, to how journalists feel about the traumatized people and traumatic events they are reporting and witnessing. Trauma is a key research concept because it is an embodied, emotional experience that is outside the institutional rules of the journalistic game.

The experience of trauma is, however, object-related and, so, activated or triggered by other people's suffering of trauma. Tester (2001: 23), building on Bourdieu (1998: 41), theorizes a conflict in the 'habitus' (the sociological field of journalistic practice) of journalism between objectivity and sensationalism that forces out ethical agency into individual, personal subjectivities; what Tester calls *ethical subjectivity*. Is mediated trauma becoming a sensationalist rule of the game, a political economic, commercial device of infotainment to attract global audiences? If so, whose trauma is operating, journalists' traumas or the journalists' subjects' traumas? Trauma is theoretically framed in Chapter Two (2.4) using work

¹ Despite efforts to integrate it into his theory, the phenomenon of trauma as a psychological category between phantasy and experience confronted Freud with the limits of his own theory, forcing him to reduce the primacy of his pleasure principle, and leading to his postulation of the power of the death drive. This is relevant for my work because, like Žižek and Adorno below, it illustrates this abysmal gap, this traumatic flaw, between Enlightenment theory and human practice, between rules of the Enlightenment game and experience.

by Meek (2010), Muhlmann (2008), Caruth (1996) and Tester (2001), and analytically addressed through empirical evidence in Chapter Five.

Objectivity emerged as a scientific ideal out of the historical process of modernity, the Enlightenment, as an attempt to awaken reason in mankind. But there has arguably always remained a traumatic flaw in the project:

‘For is it not the case that modernity’s mode of reason – for all its worth – cannot bring reason under its own critique? Is not the Achilles heel of reason precisely the fact that it cannot be deployed against itself? This is because if you fold reason back against itself, it panics’. (Zizek, 2009: 10)

This traumatic flaw is mapped by Adorno and Horkheimer’s *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (1973) as well as by other members of the Frankfurt School, such as Benjamin (2002) and Marcuse (1991).

‘Adorno argues suffering and trauma play a key role in the task of enlightening Enlightenment. They emphasize the concrete particularity of human existence [experience] in a way that is radically challenging to Enlightenment thought. Understanding suffering helps to drive a negative dialectics that preserves the non-identical [Otherness²] (that which cannot be understood, manipulated or controlled by reason), holding it up against the instrumentalism, abstraction and reification that have prevented Enlightenment thought from fulfilling its promise’. (Schick, 2008: i)

I believe that what Schick articulates here (*pace* Adorno), in line with Zizek, is the traumatic difference between instrumental reason or rationality and a more holistic understanding of reason. From an instrumental political economic perspective, journalistic emotion is simplistically construed as a device to attract audiences and extract profit. As stated above, for Tester, political economy leads to a dichotomy, a conflict in the journalistic field between sensationalism and objectivity. Tester’s theory is critically addressed in Section 2.6 and mobilized against the research data in Chapter Six. I believe reason, like objectivity, is a

² In the tradition of Adorno, Levinas, Derrida and Zizek, I propose to reify Otherness and the Other with a capital letter.

complex humanist ideal. Žižek evokes reason as a kind of double-edged sword, good for instrumental deployment in the external, 'objective' world; dangerous, in his view, when employed as a self-reflective tool.

Trauma, a concept derived from psychoanalytic literature and practice, is here being used to explore elite British foreign correspondents' experiences of trauma in the field of reporting war, conflict and crisis. Is journalistic trauma a manifestation of a flaw in the application of objectivity, a source of panic and internal conflict between the learned routine practice of objectivity being flooded by the unplanned rising up of emotional trauma or biological affect, an emergent voice? As argued above, trauma from an objective perspective does not account for individual, subjective experience. Nor does it account for the object of trauma. In other words, what traumatizes one foreign correspondent, be it traumatic objects such as systematic violence, rape, extreme human suffering in the forms of poverty or starvation, genocide or child slaughter, does not necessarily traumatize another. Trauma is not only an objective phenomenon; it is a subjective one, as well as an emotional one.

'Therapy' literally means the medical treatment of physical and mental illness. The key 'illness' addressed in this thesis is that of trauma and post-traumatic stress syndrome (PTSD). Trauma and therapy are central debates in media studies academic literature as well as journalistic culture. Key strands of the academic literature on trauma and therapy culture are mapped in Chapter Two, then tested against the research material in Chapter Five, especially with regard to the Dart Centre for Journalism and Trauma. Trauma and therapy discourse is also operationalized in Chapter Seven: Life Narratives. Journalistic trauma forms the second main debate in Chapter Two.

Emotional dissociation and political disassociation, as examples of emotional and political deferral, can be theoretically linked to objective journalistic practice through notions of detachment and neutralization or autonomization of self against the observed world, away from the material that the foreign correspondent is observing. This, for advocates of objective agency, may be counter-intuitive. The experience of trauma is dissociative,³ a form of detachment and sealing off from the external world. So, where does this leave the foreign

³ According to Laplanche and Pontalis (1973: 476), following Freud, trauma is a psychic conflict preventing the subject from integrating an experience into his conscious personality.

correspondent who is constantly engaged with reporting traumatic events? It is important to investigate how foreign correspondent discourse (i.e. the interviews) demonstrate that their practice of reporting trauma is constituted, particularly their management of emotion through reporting traumatic events, in order to breathe new analytical life into the relationship between journalistic theory and practice of international crisis reporting.

1.3: Research Question Three

The issue of detachment sometimes encompasses a totalizing view from nowhere. It sometimes entails an emotional dissociation. How does British foreign correspondent discourse demonstrate that 'distance' from and 'proximity' to traumatic events and sufferers of trauma are constituted when correspondents witness wars, conflicts and crises? Journalistic 'distance' constitutes the third main journalistic debate and research question that will be taken up in Chapter Five alongside the concepts of witnessing and time. Detachment, dissociation and distance are, of course, not synonymous terms. But what they have in common is an agency that attributes action to an independent part of the self. Cohen postulates forms of denial such as detachment, dissociation and distance as forms of splitting:

'A radical denial of responsibility is to attribute your action to another, autonomous part of the self: as in Freudian models of dissociation, compartmentalization and ego splitting'. (2001:92)

I intend to mobilize all three sub-concepts of distance, detachment and dissociation under the rubric of witnessing. Witnessing is the third central concept of this research project.

Objectivity is a mediated practice (Tuchman) that is filtered by subjective and partial agencies. By studying the world objectively, journalists may look at it as agents detached from themselves and, by doing so, they may cease to see that they are using perspectives that constrain as well as enlighten. In other words, they may

see the 'external' world but they may not see their 'internal' ways of seeing; their blind spots, if you like. Some foreign correspondents deploy subjectivity and attach themselves politically in order to report in ways they consider to be more truthful, compassionate or ethical than objective. These positionalities constitute different modalities of agency than objective ones, agencies that more consciously constitute political and/or subjective dimensions. These agencies constitute research question four (see below).

There is an emerging body of literature on media witnessing that reflects the tension between objective witnessing as distant civil inattention and a closer form of ethical bodily testament and attachment: Meek (2010) Frosh (2009) and Peters (2009). Perhaps there are moments when journalistic norms do not function as usual, moments that have to do with some kind of international 'crisis', conflict or war, a traumatic collapse of the ruling 'totalitarian' objective, an interpretative frame, moments which are experienced both ontologically and epistemologically. The fourth principal concept operationalized in this thesis, particularly in relation to journalistic agency of witnessing trauma, is that of time. Some media analysts argue that a different kind of media coverage of conflict, crisis and trauma is emerging, supported by new media digital and satellite technology. For Hoskins (2004), this kind of mediation, appearing as if immediate and unmediated, has to do with an excess of temporal constraint, a demand for 'liveness', of ongoing 24-hour coverage. Do these moments allow for more emotional, personal and political voices and styles than are usual from journalists? Do they demand more of the journalists themselves and break open the mould of diurnal routine news coverage? Are these, perhaps, moments of charismatic 'heroism' and performance? Take a recent example, that of Jonathan Miller, foreign correspondent for Channel Four News, when he made the following remark on BBC Radio Four's *The Media Show* (30/3/11) in the context of a widely reported news story in Libya about Iman Al-Obaidi:

'Reporting from Libya has tested my professional impartiality and objectivity to the very limit. We're journalists, but we are also human beings. And when you see the repression and the violence with which ordinary people are treated, it sort of shakes you. Although all my journalistic training, the objectivity, the impartiality in which I'm schooled

to be a reporter, to be detached, that was lost in the case of Iman Al-Obaidi, I must confess’.

It is in moments such as these that a different journalistic discourse may emerge, a more complex, emotional, human one, often affected with trauma and compassion. Compassion is another central concept that emerged from the respondents’ rich empirical material and speaks to the theoretical concerns of Bourdieu, Giddens and Foucault who, respectively, posit institutional ‘rules of the game’ (‘habitus’ or sociological field of practice), structuration and discourse as more complex explorations of the agent/structure binary of ideals such as objectivity and compassion.

1.4: Research Question Four

Agency and subjectivity are problems not only within journalism studies but also within social scientific academic discourse because they complicate the sedimented binary between objectivity and politics. The fourth main question of this research project asks how the respondents constitute emotional attachments, feelings such as compassion, moral loyalties and ethical agency. The fourth major journalistic debate, around compassion, is taken up in Chapter Two: Theoretical Framework, using the works of Tester (2001), Chouliaraki (2006), Moeller (1999) and Boltanski (1999) This theoretical work will also be critically applied to how the respondents demonstrated that they constituted compassion in Chapter Six. For some theoreticians, emotional dispositionality is a set of bodily, physical, affective experiences, not simply mental ones (Peters, 2009). This point is discussed in Chapter Six as sensory journalism (6.2).

As stated above, three dominant strands of sociological theory of agency are activated in this research project. Pierre Bourdieu, Anthony Giddens and Michel Foucault, each puncture the sedimented, structural boundaries between subject and object, subjectivity and objectivity, discourses of Us versus Them, inside and outside. Bourdieu theorizes institutional agency as ‘rules of the game’, which he applies to journalism as well as academia. He recognizes external structures,

objects, as internalized in the 'habitus', while the actions of the agent externalize interactions between actors into the social relationships in the field.

For Giddens, an agent's interaction with structure, as a system of norms, is described as 'structuration' (1982). Journalistic activity in covering traumatic events comes up against institutional rules of 'objective' reporting even as journalists' senses and bodies are filled with competing emotional responses. This particular example of structure versus agency is what drives this entire thesis. Up until now, there has been relatively scant academic research on journalistic agency and emotion (see 2.1), an omission which this research seeks to rectify.

According to Foucault, discourse is constitutive of power (1989: 34-43); it is the 'space' of political conflict. Discourse is knowledge, a regime of truth and meaning that legitimizes certain discourses and marginalizes others by rendering them false. Foucault maintains that theoretical models assuming a binary opposition between 'dominant' and 'alternative', such as between institutional and independent voices, are unhelpful because they reduce the complex process and potentiality of power contestation. One central concept that emerged from the interview material and speaks to a central theoretical concern of Foucault's work is that of truth. Truth arose from several of the interviewees' voices as a complex journalistic refinement of the other four central concepts of objectivity, trauma, witnessing and time, supplied by the interview questions. According to Foucault:

'Truth isn't outside power or lacking in power ... truth isn't the reward of free spirits, the child of protracted solitude, nor the privilege of those who have succeeded in liberating themselves. Truth is a thing of this world: it is produced only by virtue of multiple forms of constraint. And it induces regular forms of power ... it is produced and transmitted under the control, dominant if not exclusive, of a few great political and economic apparatuses (university, army, writing, media)'. (1984: 73)

Analysis of how the respondents' interview material demonstrates how elite British foreign correspondents constitute truth is performed in Chapter Six. Journalistic articulations of truth are articulated with Foucauldian theory of truth as discursive regimes of truth. Foucault made the important hermeneutic point that, for the

subject to have 'right of access to truth', s/he must be changed and become, to a certain extent, other than him/herself (2001: 15). In terms of the narrative thread of the thesis, this is an important qualification of inside/outside agency.

self, according to Foucault, is also subject to regular forms of power such as institutional media. That is why the last research question examines the discourse of journalistic autobiography.

1.5: Research Question Five

The fifth and final central research question, employing autobiographical material as well as interview research findings, asks how respondents constitute autobiographical influences and experiences. This question is mobilized to draw out consistencies (with the interview data), contradictions and complexities. For example, how do the respondents respond to therapeutic discourse, institutionally as well as individually? Therapeutic discourse is a trope that runs through Giddens' notion of reflexivity as a form of self-monitoring and Wittgenstein's notion of work on oneself. Autobiography theoretically encompasses personal and professional identities, so how are these addressed in foreign correspondent autobiographies? Chapter Seven: Life Narratives, mobilizes my theory of complex agency as a human-contained bundle of institutional rules, such as objectivity, emotional attachments and moral loyalties. It adds another layer to British foreign correspondent discourse, that of self and life influences.

Autobiography is the seventh and final critical concept of this thesis. One interesting question that builds on journalism analytic research by Lichter et al. (1986), Miljan and Cooper (2003) and cultural analysis by Lasch (1979) is whether the interviewees are narcissists (see 2.7). This begs the question of whether only these interviewees, or whether journalists in general are narcissists. Narcissism means self-love and has mostly negative connotations. I consider reflexivity and narcissism to be important attributes of self-awareness, layers of internalized principles. I hold that narcissism is undesirable when it becomes unreflexive, self-contained, inward-looking and not Other-constituted. I am interested in Freud's theory of the narcissism of minor differences (1918: 199). This phrase refers to the

fact that often trivial differences between people who are otherwise alike form the basis of alienation and hostility between them. The fourteen respondents are alike in many ways, and not in others, as is evident in the Conclusion.

Self-reflection or reflexivity (and narcissism) are conceptual components of autobiographical discourse operationalized throughout this research project, in Chapters Five, Six and Seven. The design of all five research questions (and eighteen interview questions) is expressly to elicit reflexive responses. Many of the respondents provided clearly rich self-reflexive material, sometimes critiques of each other as narcissists, sometimes self-critiques. I do not set out to make psychoanalytic evaluations of the fourteen respondents but I am interested in how they self-evaluate their agency and evaluate each other's agencies.

Autobiography is theoretically framed using Derrida ('fantasm of inclusion'), Foucault (hermeneutics of the self) and Wittgenstein (competing pictures of introspection), and analytically addressed through examination of autobiographical material in Chapter Seven.

1.6: Conclusion

Taken together, the material makes a strong case for understanding foreign correspondence as complex agency, a space of contradictory demands between institutional constraints, moral loyalties, emotional attachments and autobiographical influences. Complex agency will be explained at length in the next chapter (2.7). Carey frames journalistic agency as follows:

'... journalists do not live in a world of disembodied ideals; they live in a world of practices. These practices not only make the world, they make the journalist. Journalists are constituted in practice. So, the appropriate question is not only what kind of world journalists make but also what kinds of journalists are made in the process'. (Carey, 1989)

Emotion is interesting because it is not individually self-contained but object-related and value-oriented, a hermeneutic part of selfhood, so plays a significant role in the communicative process and the process of mediation. Emotion (and affect) are subjects that seems to be emerging in Western popular discourse, as well as academic discourse. One of the main currents of this rise of emotional discourse is 'therapeutic culture' and its psychoanalytic association with 'the talking cure' and 'confessionalism' (Furedi, 2004; Lupton, 1998; Pantti, 2012; Wahl-Jorgensen, 2012). Recent buzzwords⁴ that allude to this cultural change affecting news culture are breaking 'live' news, feeling the story,⁵ immediacy, 'therapy' news and 'conscious' journalism. In Britain, there has been an emotionalization of the public sphere, a public mass mediated space for orchestration and display of emotion, especially since the death of Princess Diana in 1997 and the events of 9/11/01 (Blackman and Walkerdine, 2001; Dalrymple, 2010), right up until this year's mass-disseminated event of Margaret Thatcher's death and the theatricalized murder of a soldier in Woolwich, south London.

In new (digital) media culture, commercial interest in emotion as a device to maximize audiences has produced 'infotainment':

'In short the new media [cable and satellite TV and the Internet] are creating an environment that is increasingly incompatible with the structures and practices that maintained the news-entertainment distinction for most of this century. As these walls crumble, the form and content of news entertainment come to resemble each other more closely, laying bare what has always been a socially constructed distinction. What is clear is that this new media environment presents a direct challenge to the authority of elites – journalists, policy experts, public officials, academics, and the like – who served as gatekeepers under the old system'. (Delli, Carpini and Williams, 2001: 167)

⁴ For example, 'Blanket coverage from Therapy News', Tessa Mayes; <http://www.spiked-online.com/index.php?site/printable/742>.

⁵ Earlier this year, this expression was used by Sherine Tadros in a 'promo' for Al-Jazeera news on Al-Jazeera English.

This is further evidence of a deconstruction of objective authority in news media discourse.

A growing critique (Delli, Carpini and Williams, 2001: 160-181) argues that 'real-time' news is making news nothing more than infotainment, stories with moral and emotional resonances, making no claims to objective mediation. Chapter Two: Theoretical Framework, will now summarize previous academic research on journalism and journalistic agency in the form of a literature review (2.1). It will then expound five key media debates and their academic literatures: these are journalistic practice as objectivity; journalistic trauma; journalistic 'distance', witnessing and time; journalisms of attachment; and autobiography. These debates help me analyse the nature of journalistic agency and subjectivity in foreign correspondent discourse.

Chapter Two: Theoretical Framework

2.1: Previous work on journalism and journalistic agency

In the 1980s, an interesting study by Lichter *et al.* (1986), *The Media Elite*, surveyed 240 elite journalists and found that they constituted a homogeneous, liberal and cosmopolitan group which had an ambiguous relation with power, a fascination with but also a scepticism towards it. In psychological terms, they were characterized as narcissistic with a reduced capacity for intimacy – in other words, they led a kind of ‘insider’s life with an outsider’s self-image’. This seems to be a rare example, maybe the first since Molotch and Lester (1974), of a piece of research that attempts to address notions of journalistic agency (see Appendix Three). Lichter *et al.* found that journalists constituted a kind of homogeneous psychological group. Lichter’s research seemed to use a relatively simple methodology (survey) and, despite its unusual focus on journalists as a psychosocial group, came to the conclusion that they acted in social concert rather than as individual agents. Such a conclusion is by no means to be ignored or resisted but, I claim, needs further refinement. The theme of narcissism is taken up below in 2.6 and 2.7 below and in Chapter Seven.

In the 1990s, a good deal of interest in institutional- or organizational-level analysis of the news emerged because ‘instrumental’ perspectives from political economy did not seem to speak to current media activism (Dreier, 1982: 111-132) and the relevance of local, micro elements. These approaches attempted to escape the two main flaws of macro approaches: generalization and the assumption that media practitioners are passive receivers of ideological power.

The theoretical and methodological lines of thinking that privilege a focus on macro constraints do so at the expense of interrogating the role of the journalist, the ‘local’ end of the newsmaking process. In other words, macro approaches regard journalists as ‘unheterogeneous’, interchangeable, undifferentiated economic units. Institutional, organizational and professional approaches similarly have little to say about journalistic agency, except maybe that social construction is one aspect of routine journalistic practice. Manning White’s

study was ostensibly concerned with an editor's agency but came to the conclusion that 'news production was often mechanical, routine, passive and systematic' (Golding and Elliott, 1979); therefore, that agency was not an issue in this context at this time. Gieber's research six years later (1956) came to virtually the same conclusion. Two decades later, Molotch and Lester's social constructionist research (1974) suggested something new in the sense, at least, that newsmakers construct rather than reflect reality, shifting the balance of power from outside to inside the media institution. But Molotch and Lester's work certainly did not go so far as to suggest that there was any scope for individual, agentive, value-laden decisions in the newsmaking process.

Schlesinger (1978), Golding and Elliott (1979) and Fishman (1980) all adopted more 'micro' approaches but basically came to the same conclusion, that newsmaking is routine, manufactured, pre-planned and bureaucratic. As argued above, this research is concerned with a historical inattention to notions of journalistic agency. The study of journalistic practice can be complicated and enriched not by taking sides in the subjectivism/objectivism debate but by re-examining individual journalistic practice to retest the valid propositions of political economy and social construction. In other words, journalists are dynamic practitioners occupying a discursive space between performing individual agency and structural instrumentalism. This is where complex agency comes in. How do British foreign correspondents constitute themselves in their practice of reporting conflict, crises and trauma? What are their perceived 'rules of the game', their emotional attachments and life narratives? Those 'micro' approaches that have come closest to looking at journalists as individual actors subject to personal constraints have all come to the conclusion that one journalist differs very little from the next. Perhaps now is an appropriate historical moment to retest the validity of the notion of journalistic agency.

Post-Cold War ethnographic research (Baisnée, O., and Marchetti, D., 2006) has mostly stressed the market-driven nature of media institutions and, to all intents and purposes, corroborates evidence derived from political-economic methodology. All of this points to a lack of research on individual journalists. It reveals several interesting news production research lacunae. Since the end of the Cold War, television as a news medium has obtained a powerful competitive edge over newspapers, arguably as a result of the introduction of satellite technology

and 'digitization'. Investment in television technology almost inevitably derives from the fact that much larger audiences are available through television, which increases profitability. The emergence of 24-hour rolling news occurred as a result of CNN's coverage of the first Gulf War (1990-1).

'Micro' ethnographic studies have not, in general, paid attention to the routinization of the unexpected, of war, conflict and crisis. There has been a discernible shift in Western culture since 1989 towards breaking news as drama in the form of sensational live moving images which newspapers cannot provide, the emergence of live reality television and global narratives that can be spread more widely through the visual medium of television than the relatively more word-based, diurnal medium of newspapers. Both breaking news and reality television employ 'real-time' as well as a kind of generic blurring of drama and documentary (Delli, Carpini and Williams in Bennett and Entman, 2001: 160-181). New post-Cold War narratives that have emerged are triumphalist liberal-conservative ones (Fukuyama (1993), Huntington (2002), especially post 9/11 War on Terror and Al-Qaida. In short, the combined effect of pictures, drama and heightened emotion in real-time (extreme temporal constrain) leading to much more substantial audiences, especially during an international crisis, cannot be achieved by newspapers. And this is part of the reason for focusing this research on the agency of television as well as press journalists and their mediation of international conflict and crises, when global, dramatic, mythical narratives are being disseminated around the world. Such 'events' or historical moments include the war in Bosnia (April 1992 – December 1995), 9/11, the Iraq War (2003), the Asian tsunami (2004), 7/7/05 and the war in Libya (2010).

Historically speaking, the end of the Cold War and 9/11 may well have transformed the journalistic terrain. Technologically, the global uncoupling of space and time (Thompson, 1995) and the introduction of satellite and computer technology have, perhaps, shifted journalistic practice. Conceptually, one of the routine mainstays of journalistic practice, objectivity, now seems to be undergoing serious mainstream re-evaluation to make way for more value-oriented thought paradigms, such as partiality, emotion and agency.

In terms of the existing academic literature on the practices of war correspondents, I have identified eight academic books. Amongst the relevant academic literature, Knightley (2002) provides a critical and historical account of

war reporting and propaganda since the Crimean War. Masse (2011) looks at the emotional consequences of the professional responsibility of print and broadcast war reporters through biographical sketches concerning significant traumatic events such as the Oklahoma City bombing, the Columbine school tragedy, 9/11, the Iraq War, the South Asian tsunami and Hurricane Katrina.

McLaughlin (2002) interviews prominent war and foreign journalists, arguing that foreign correspondence is determined not so much by professional imperatives as by military pressures and market forces outside the control of the journalist.

Hoskins (2004) claims that television is central to the 'social memory of war', the practice by which societies and 'social frameworks' manage narratives of the past and shape an agreed collective memory (2004). He argues that certain perspectives on the past are reproduced through the repetition of specific images while alternatives get 'forgotten' due to their absence from television screens.

Tumber and Webster (2006) focus on journalists working for the British media and several French, German and US correspondents. Their interviews address the background and career progression of members of the group, individual perceptions of their own motivations, ethics, work practices and relationships with colleagues. The interviews and autobiographies provide information on what it was like to report on conflict and how this may have changed over time.

Feinstein, a neuro-psychiatrist, writes about the emotional and traumatic impact of war on correspondents, photographers and videographers. He also looks at the role of gender and institutional support.

Markham (2011) takes a 'Bourdiesian' approach, drawing on anonymous interviews with war reporters and military personnel to explore issues of authority, authenticity, ethics and morality.

Robinson et al. (2012) focus on the British reporting of the 2003 invasion of Iraq and draw on interviews with some journalists involved, as well as framing and content news media analysis.

Hess (1996) and Hannerz (2004) both examine foreign correspondence. Hess examines its human dimension, emphasizing the nature of foreign

correspondents, not attending directly to agency and discourse. Hannerz, as an ethnographer, draws on seventy or so interviews with foreign correspondents and foreign editors. He focuses primarily on print foreign correspondents, understanding them as ethnographic writers.

The semi-structured nature of the interview questions in my research provided the journalists with opportunities to offer their knowledge that could then be set against the academic literature in order to reveal synergies and new academic knowledge. In other words, objectivity, trauma and witnessing provide viable bridges between academic and journalistic discourse. They led to more nuanced, complex analytical categories and sub-categories: institutional 'rules of the game', trauma, emotional attachments and life narratives. This study sets out to interrogate what journalists have to say about their agency, how they understand their uses of objectivity and emotion, reporting conflict and trauma. Complex agency is a concerted theoretical attempt to puncture sedimented binaries that exist in media analytic literature between subject and object, micro and macro, individual and institutional, active and passive agency.

The theoretical framework that follows is divided into seven parts that underscore complex agency as a mode of professionalism which is structured and structuring of the institutional power relations of the journalistic habitus. Section 2.1 has sketched a history of research on journalism and journalistic agency. The first part of the theoretical literature review (2.3: Journalistic practice as objectivity) draws primarily on the work of Bourdieu, the central theoretical frame of this thesis, complemented by the work of Giddens and Lasch. The second part (2.4) draws on Meek, Carruth and Muhlmann. The third part (2.5: Journalistic 'distance' and witnessing) draws on Bauman, Giddens and Lasch for 'distance', on Frosh and Peters for witnessing; and Hoskins for time. The fourth part (2.6: Journalistic compassion) draws on Bourdieu, Tester, Chouliaraki, Moeller and Boltanski. The fifth section (2.7: Journalistic autobiography) draws theoretically primarily on Wittgenstein, Derrida and Foucault. Finally, Section 2.8 makes the case for the theory of complex agency as the culmination of institutional rules and constraints, emotional attachments, moral loyalties and autobiographical influences.

Trauma, as a leading interview question, is, from a political economic perspective, an economically viable rule of the game. But it is also an articulation and manifestation of a phenomenon that is personal and partially outside of the

game. That is why it is separate from 'Institutional Rules' but also overlaps with it. Hence, Chapter Five: Trauma is contiguous to and follows Chapter Four: Institutional Rules.

I separate the theoretical debates about journalistic trauma and journalistic witnessing and distance in the Theoretical Framework (2.4 and 2.5). Theories of journalistic witnessing are generally split between witnessing as an objective institutional rule of the game (from the 'outside') and witnessing as emotional attachment (from the 'inside'). Theories of trauma often understand the experience of trauma to be a temporary collapse of professional distance from proximate trauma.

I discuss witnessing, distance, time and trauma in one core chapter (Five) because the interviews demonstrated that the respondents' experiences of witnessing and trauma were inextricably linked through the prism of 'distance'. As two of the central concepts of this thesis, trauma and witnessing blur the distinction between subjectivity and objectivity, inside and outside, agency and structure.

Modern journalism's 'neutral' style developed, at least in part, as a way to provide journalists and their audience a means to distance themselves from the emotional impact of trauma as it was used as a repetitive formula in the conveyance of news about warfare, natural disasters, crime, and other traumatic occurrences (Underwood, 2011: 21)

Other less formal, more subjective 'rules of the game' that emerged from all fourteen journalists were truth, morality, history, compassion/empathy, identification and competition in the field of foreign correspondence. With the exception of 'history' and 'emotion', which are analysed in Chapter Four, these agencies clearly move further outside formal institutional 'rules of the game' and they are discussed together in Chapter Six: Emotional Attachments.

The key concept mobilized in Chapter Seven is autobiography, potentially a form of subjectivity. Here, the thesis narrative moves even further away from institutional rules but, interestingly, also revisits objectivity to a certain extent. Chapter Seven: Life Narratives looks at autobiography in order to cross-reference biographical data (elicited through particular interview questions) with autobiographical public disclosures, published as books, for five institutional

journalist interviewees. Chapter Seven also brings in other non-interviewed journalistic voices from both the institutional and independent worlds.

2.2: Pre-habitus journalistic experience

The central question of this thesis is to find out and contextualize how British foreign correspondents demonstrate that their practices of reporting conflict, crises and trauma have been constituted. In light of this, it is relevant to know what training programmes, if any, the journalists had undergone before entering the field of foreign correspondence. This is important because questions of objectivity and emotional engagement ought to be discussed through this prism. If they have received training, how were the journalists trained to think about what emotionality, objectivity and truth mean *in practice*?

The respondents were each asked (interview question 1) whether s/he had undertaken journalistic training and, if so, what the nature of the training had been. The respondents' interviewee profiles including age, gender, current positions, education, training and experience are compiled and tabulated in Appendix Two. Very few interviewees undertook any kind of formal training. This implies that most learning took place on the job, through peers and informal mentors and, above all, through experience. Little and O'Kane undertook some training. Little trained as a local radio reporter and O'Kane took a one-year journalism course. Simpson trained as a sub-editor before becoming a reporter. Brayne completed a graduate traineeship at Reuters. Keane and Little began their professional careers working in regional/local contexts before becoming national voices. Pilger started his journalistic life writing for a student newspaper. His greatest influence was travel:

I think my 'ideology' is one that has developed over many years of seeing how the world works and how people live. And I think that's been, probably, and I'm not sure about this, I think that's probably been the greatest influence on me that, from a very young age, I started travelling as a reporter and I've always been a reporter. And off the deep end, if you like,

from a comfortable life in a Western country to seeing how most of humanity lives.

None of the interviewees, to the best of my knowledge, had any formal foreign correspondent training or education tailored to a particular regional speciality. One or two of the respondents took temporary language instruction but there were no formal institutional rules that demanded their learning about specific regions, cultures, religions or ethnicities. This reinforces the institutional rule of the game of outsiderliness, maybe even emphasizing it, at the expense of a more participatory or activist agency or strategy. It also makes for a generalist in foreign affairs rather than a country or area expert, a fact that is signified in the signifier, 'foreign' correspondent.

The dearth of foreign correspondent training for this research group validates the importance of the interview material because it supports the thesis' main idea that journalistic agency is shaped by professional experience, that is learning through and on the job. Given that none of the journalists had any training in reporting overseas wars, conflicts and crises, their life narrative influences are clearly constituted by their formal educations, as well as what they learned on the job. Lack of formal journalistic training also validates the importance of looking more closely at the journalists' education, even childhood experiences. The interviews do not constitute their practice. The interviews demonstrate that their practice has been largely constituted since they began being foreign correspondents. Their practice was also partially constituted before they entered the journalistic profession. Journalistic practice is shaped by how early experiences are incorporated into narratives of the (professional) self.

2.3: Journalistic practice as objectivity

A central debate that reverberates in media theory and journalistic practice is the gap, the difference, between journalism-as-value and journalism-as-practice. Objectivity as a value, as an ideal, is subject to individual, subjective interpretations.

This debate is encapsulated in interview question 2. This debate is mobilized in Chapter Four.

Given that objectivity is a matter of interpretation, what makes 'distant' witnessing more objective than bodily testimony (Peters, 2009) that purports to provide a more spatially and temporally immediate truthful description of crises? Bodily testimony aims to sensorily communicate what it feels like to be there as a traumatic event is unfolding, an agency which is arguably more objective, at least temporarily. This debate is hinted at in Chapter Four, then fully mobilized using the research data and key theoretical literatures in Chapter Six.

The answers interviewees gave to interview question 2 led to a set of nuanced rules that institutional respondents associated with objectivity. These are accuracy, impartiality, vision or image, proper use of time, different stances on 'distance' and centring. These six 'rules of the game' are theorized below. The issue of time led to an interview discussion about the difference between '*longue durée*' historical time and 'breaking', 'real-time' and the mediation of historical events in their very making. How some of the respondents demonstrated that they constituted their senses of '*longue durée*' historical time as well as being rough drafters of history in the present, so to speak, is discussed in Chapter Four: History and Emotion. Chapters Five and Six then explore more partial, subjective, personal experiences of being and time, in the interest of mediating history.

This thesis adheres to the understanding of the practice of journalistic objectivity as a game or a strategy (Tuchman, 1972). Bourdieu articulates the 'rules of the game' as means to an end whereby players absorb the rules so comprehensively that, arguably, the distinction between agency and subjectivity can become blurred. Such an institutional discourse challenges inside/outside discourse by standardizing the 'inside', the journalistic field and delimiting it from the 'outside'. Inside/outside discourse is one of the central concerns of this thesis, the tension between institutionally derived external constraints and 'rules of the game', and other 'rules of the game' such as trauma and compassion, that may derive from personal experience. This tension leads to the second research question (journalistic trauma), the third central research question (journalistic 'distance' and witnessing) and the fourth research question (autobiography). I conceive of these five central concepts, objectivity, trauma, 'distance' and

witnessing, compassion and autobiography, as interlocking and overlapping layers of foreign correspondent discourse and complex agency.

This project tests Bourdieu's claim that 'the agent is never completely the subject of his practices'.

'The language of strategy, which one is forced to use in order to designate the sequences of actions objectively oriented towards an end that are observed in all fields, must not mislead us: the most effective strategies are those which, being the product of dispositions shaped by the immanent necessity of the field, tend to adjust themselves spontaneously to that necessity, without express intention or calculation. In other words, the agent is never completely the subject of his practices'. (Bourdieu, 2000: 10)

This theoretical perspective is what this thesis calls 'complex agency'. This is adumbrated below in 2.8. Bourdieu conceptualizes objective practice as follows:

'... this duality of practice⁶ is rendered viable by a sort of self-deception or self-mystification; but this individual self-deception is sustained by a collective self-deception, a veritable misrecognition inscribed in objective structures and in mental structures, excluding the possibility of thinking or acting otherwise'. (Bourdieu, 1998: 93-8)

As Markham, building on the above, usefully elucidates:

'While it is often necessary to proceed as if conscious design were at work, it is the "feel for the game" (Bourdieu, 1990a: 66-8), the capacity for spontaneous reaction without intention or reflection, which is salient'. (Markham, 2001: 9)

⁶ For Bourdieu, duality of practice is 'subjective truth' and 'objective reality' (Bourdieu, 1998: 95).

It is this ‘feel for the game’ that I set out to explore through my interviewee group. The answers to my interview questions demonstrate how the interviewees’ complex agencies have been constituted by their practice, of which objectivity is a part. In other words, how does a foreign correspondent feel, understand and practice objectivity? I wanted to understand from journalists themselves how they understand what the rules of the journalistic game are. My theoretical approach complements and builds upon Tuchman’s theory of journalistic objectivity as strategic ritual. Where it departs from Tuchman and Bourdieu is in identifying, differentiating and contextualizing journalistic understandings of their subjectivities and agencies.

It is my understanding that objectivity is operational in both media analytic and journalistic contexts. Objectivity is a theoretical concept that I deliberately put directly into the interview questions. What emerged from some of the journalists’ understandings of objectivity was the analytic category of unconscious emotion and instinctual practice. Chapter Four discusses how instinctual, unconscious agency is demonstrated in the interviews. The term ‘unconscious agency’ by no means implies that the interviewee group do not know what they are doing. The more substantive, primary issue for many of the interviewees was when to be conscious of being affected by highly emotionally charged events and whether to share their affect with the viewers; or whether to deploy conscious emotion at all.

interview question Three asked respondents whether being an outsider was a desirable rule of the game. Eleven institutional voices concurred that it was a desirable rule for their practice of foreign correspondence. The more independent ones – Pilger and Fisk in particular – were more reticent about such a professional attribute (see Chapter Four). It seemed important to me to try to detect what other ‘rules of the game’ were important to the interviewees and/or whether new rules were emerging for some of the journalists. One potentially new rule was that of compassion (see 2.5 below and Chapter Six). In interview discussions about objectivity, interviewees supplied the analytic category of compassion. The concept was then analytically mobilized as a sub-category of emotional attachments (Chapter Six).

Journalistic metaphors of objectivity include ‘window on the world’, reflecting or mirroring reality and ‘seeing is believing’, all of which inhere in notions

of singular truth, visual discourse and universal natural light. Muhlmann identifies associative links between facticity, objectification and sight:

‘Among the major rituals of journalism, which make it possible to present ‘facts’ acceptable to all, that is not reducible to a single point of view, but objectified, we need to emphasize the use of *sights*. From the beginning, unifying journalism seems to have relied on the *eye*, *as opposed to the voice*, as a means of objectification; to unify, to be collectively received as a group of facts, and not of singular opinions, the newspaper had to provide something to *see*, and had to cease (at last) to be content, like the newspapers of opinion, with *saying*’. (Muhlmann, 2008: 13)

The ‘light’ in Enlightenment is a telling metaphor for concerted notions of visibility and seeing through the murk of human fantasy and religion, notions that now lend themselves to newspaper photos but more importantly to (moving) television pictures. Zelizer has explored the terrain of journalist images in times of crisis and war (2002; 2004; 2011). Visual discourse is another rule of the institutional game. This overdependence on vision and sight is regarded by some Marxian commentators as being one-dimensional, superficial and uncritical (Marcuse, 1991; Debord, 1994; Jay, 1994); even morally blind (Bauman, 2013). After all, human perception is comprised of five senses, only one of which is sight. According to psychological theory, this imbalance is related to scopophilia:

‘Sexual stimulation or satisfaction derived principally from looking; voyeurism’.⁷

The visual metaphor is extended throughout Western post-Enlightenment thought. Mediated visual communication inevitably creates a sense of distance and alienation between the viewer and mediated events, a boundary between ‘internal’ and ‘external’. One way of permeating visual distance, voyeurism, is ‘sensory’ journalism, described in Chapter Six.

⁷ <http://oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/scopophilia?q=scopophilia>, accessed 25 June 2013.

The Enlightenment historical paradigm may be shifting as media 'reach out' to audiences by so-called 'conscious' reporting, 'therapy' news, reality television and infotainment. In fact, as argued in Chapter One, there is a whole wave of popular manifestations of discourse centred around the issue of human emotion. This will be addressed in Chapters Four to Seven. What these new journalistic genres suggest is that the issue of emotion is on the intellectual and cultural agenda again.

In objective journalism, what is invisible, i.e. what is experienced as belonging to a journalist's individual private and personal sentiment, is generally regarded as an ephemeral by-product of hard events and deemed to be too impressionistic, fluid, unstable and regressive to merit the status of objective fact. From a Marxian perspective, this would be attributable to political-economic process and power structure that renders human agency invisible in capitalist practice. Early television news broadcasts deliberately used to avoid shots of newsreaders looking into camera for the simple reason that any flicker or manifestation of emotion and facial expression might lead to a distortion of objectivity⁸. And so, news presentational emotional denial led to the compression of emotion into one de facto, legitimate default emotion, that of sincerity, to such an extent that sincerity became synonymous with truth and authenticity (Trilling, 1971).

The debate about impartiality is evident in the journalistic production of international news construed as providing the first draft of universal history (Hoskins, 2004; Graham, 1963). But it is foreign correspondents, constituted by multiple subjective voices, who write these drafts. Robert Fisk (an interviewee) makes the following point:

'I suppose, in the end, we journalists try – or should try – to be the first impartial witnesses to history. If we have any reason for our existence, the least must be our ability to report history as it happens so that no one can say, 'we didn't know; no one told us'. (Fisk, 2005: xxiii)

⁸ *How TV Changed Women*, broadcast June 2008, Channel Four.

Impartiality is, therefore, also a rule of the game. The military historian Anthony Beevor (Higgins, 2010: 8), speaking at *The Guardian* Hay Festival, 2012, argued that journalism is destructive of history with regard to the construction of scholarly accounts of recent conflicts, saying 'Journalism is an instant account and history must be a reflective account'. By 'reflective', I assume that Beevor here means reflective of reality rather than (socially) constructive. This suggests an interesting tension between journalistic objectivity and academic objectivity.

Chapter Four finds out whether and how fourteen 'British reflective' journalists are disposed to question a universal, 'objective' account of history. Objective journalists are faced with the unenviable task of reporting a rough version of what they purport to expect to become an official version of history. In a capitalist political economic context, this entails a competitive journalistic race against time to interpret what has happened, what is happening and what this may lead to. John Simpson (2010: x) states that journalism is 'not so much a first draft of history as a form of escapology'. This remark is made in the context of Simpson's experiences of reporting wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the new era of embedded foreign correspondence in which, not being an embed, being disembedded, means a lack of formal protection. Being disembedded in a conflict can mean misrecognition or non-recognition by either side. So, embedded journalism is an alliance of organizational and military institutions, a rule of the game. Being independent has become a dangerous venture outside the 'rules of the game', leading to loss of journalistic life, as documented in the wars in Iraq and Syria.

What I interpret Simpson to mean here is that self-preservation in war zones that are increasingly hostile to Western journalists plays its part in constraining the view that the journalist has of history in the making. Maybe the constraint of self-preservation in his statement implies a dichotomy – an inverse proportionality – between agency and history, which fits Bourdieu's notion that the agent is never completely the subject of his practices. Institutional temporal constraint, to which Simpson alludes above, is a less desirable element of foreign correspondents acting as and being viewed as writers of international history.

There has arguably been a historical tendency in Western reporting of international wars in which the facts about the Other are buried so deeply and often successfully that, by the time they get uncovered again, the media agenda has moved on, and so has public opinion (Bourdieu, 2001; Said, 1997). This

important use of time is another institutional rule of the game. Contrast, if you will, Simpson's contemporary model with the historical one of reporting the Vietnam War. In Vietnam, the truth that subverted American foreign policy propaganda emerged and was disseminated by the work of journalists during the Vietnam War because certain journalists there were given more time and hence more agency. This resulted in the American government losing control of the propaganda information war. Here, the myth of objectivity could not be maintained because there was an accumulation, a critical mass, of alternative viewpoints from journalists with different agencies who had access to facts that would normally be censored and suppressed.

John Laurence, a former CBS news correspondent, says the following about his professional experience in Vietnam:

'Because the war went on for so long and so much evidence accumulated to suggest it was a losing cause, and that in the process we were destroying the Vietnamese and ourselves, I felt I had a moral obligation to report my views as much as the facts'. (Cunningham, 2003)

What is interesting about this particular journalistic revelation is that he clearly alludes to the fact that more time leads to greater understanding, the imputed flipside of this being that less time leads to less balanced perspectives, in particular ones that correspond with official versions. He also seems to implicitly acknowledge that the Vietnam War constituted a relatively exceptional case where morality and personal opinions managed to override objectivity and official propaganda.

As stated in the Introduction, journalistic constitutions of objective agency inhere in a belief that a good objective journalist is able to maintain a professional lid on any inner, private thoughts and emotions that may affect or detract from his/her message. In other words, objective journalism relies on journalists whose self-image, understanding and professionalism involve a proven ability to stand outside themselves, to be political and emotional outsiders. Bauman usefully theorizes the notion of ambivalent outsider (see 2.4 below).

If journalists interpret breaking news events according to their subjective whims, does not this 'decentring' open the door to different kinds of subjective,

political, private and psychological prejudices? Muhlmann makes a binary distinction between 'centring' and 'decentring' journalists. Centring journalists appeal to the largest number of audience members, seek to unify, use the discourse of 'truth' and act as 'witness-ambassadors' (2008: 6). On the other hand:

'Decentring journalists seek to make the public which 'receives' their gaze feel something very different, something deeply disturbing to the 'we'; not just a bone of contention by means of which the community ultimately reconstructs itself, but an otherness liable to dissolve the 'we', something which says to it: you hardly exist as a constituted or to-be-constituted 'we'; the 'we' that you are, or think you are, is undone'. (2008: 29)

This thesis suggests that, instead of classifying journalists as either 'centring' or 'decentring', it is preferable to complicate this binary by taking into account human and professional emotional data. It also suggests another institutional rule of the game, discursive 'centring', which aims to unify audiences through political messages contained within correspondents' reports. By contrast, 'decentring' as a journalistic rule of the game aims to disrupt the 'us' to present the Other.

Understandings of journalistic practice can be (productively) complicated by subjective as well as objective notions of truth, contingency and culture. Maybe intersubjectivity is a conceptual means of bypassing the ahistorical nature of meaning, either from inside or outside, because it articulates a more fluid two-way process. Benjamin applies the following psychoanalytic theory to articulate intersubjectivity:

'The essence of the intersubjective perspective is, "where objects were, subjects must be." Freud's insight that "the shadow of the object fell upon the ego" unveiled the process of identification. Understanding the shadow cast by the other in the space in-between seems to me an apt metaphor for intersubjectivity'. (Benjamin, 1998: xii)

Mapping this model onto the journalistic one theoretically enriches the institutional 'rules of the game', such as objectivity, by articulating them as an emotional communicative process in which agency flows between journalist and object and back again. There is an interesting theoretical intersection or merging here between intersubjectivity and complex agency, but it is important to point out that they each have separate genealogies. Intersubjectivity has grown out of psychoanalytic epistemology and object relations theory whereas complex agency derives from a more philosophical, discursive development via Collingwood, Inden and Hobart. Here, I will adhere to what I claim is an academic, philosophical, discursive form of intersubjectivity, that of complex agency. My exegesis of complex agency is articulated in 2.8 below. For some, intersubjectivity and complex agency are interchangeable at the first approximation. And, for others, they are not. I do not intend to become drawn into such a debate. For the purpose of this thesis, I will employ the qualified signifier, complex agency.

Dionne, in *They Only Look Dead* (1996), talks about conflicting journalistic diktats: be neutral yet investigative, be disengaged but impactful, be fair-minded but have an edge. These three diktats neatly encapsulate the unspoken Other attributes of journalism which are more instinctual and emotional than objective and potentially more agentic: investigative, impactful and having an edge. Bagdikian (2000: 179) asserts that 'every step of the journalistic process involves a value-laden, subjective decision':

Which of the infinite number of events in the environment will be assigned for coverage and which ignored? Which of the infinite observations confronting the reporter will be noted? Which of the facts noted will be included in the story? Which of the reported events will become the first paragraph? Which story will be prominently displayed on page 1 and which buried inside or discarded? (ibid.: 179-180)

Bagdikian's assertion complicates and enriches the political economic position, lending itself more to the ethnographic one. In fact, these decisions depend on journalistic agency. In striving to be neutral, disengaged and fair-minded, it is quite possible to overcompensate in a very subjective fashion. For example, a *Columbia Journalism Review* intern, calling newspaper letters-page editors to learn whether

readers' letters were running for or against the looming war in Iraq, was told by the letters editor at *The Tennessean* that letters were running seventy per cent against the war, but that the editors were trying to run as many pro-war letters as possible lest they be accused of bias (Cunningham, 2003). This form of gate-keeping is a pertinent example of how objectivity can slide into social construction, censorship and propaganda in the name of objectivity. It is also an example of where, despite journalist aspiration, the result of human mis/interpretation of the theory of objectivity (agency) becomes something quite different in practice. This is one of my central research questions addressed to my interviewees (interview question 2).

The news media's awkward embrace of an impossible ideal limits its ability to help set a more diverse, democratic, open agenda. But, according to the Pew Research Centre in 1999, seventy-five per cent of journalists and news executives said it was possible to obtain a true, accurate and widely agreed-upon account of an event. This confirms the consensual, centring (Muhlmann) nature of journalistic method and the fact that it is a law unto journalism, a kind of institutional denial, a rule of the game. Two-thirds thought it feasible to develop 'a systematic method to cover events in a disinterested and fair way'. Two-thirds of the print press said 'providing an interpretation of news is a core principle', but less than half of TV news agreed (Cunningham, 2003). This constitutes an interesting divergence between print and TV news media, where TV newsmakers are divided, split down the middle, about perhaps one of the most strongly held traditional 'rules of the game' of Western journalism between centring and visibility. It suggests that the experience of being a TV foreign correspondent, where the pictures are supposed to do the talking, might lead to a different agentive practice to that of press journalists, for whom the practice of articulating words without pictures, sometimes accompanying still photographs, somehow makes the journalist more present in the story. It suggests a relatively higher degree of subjective and political agency for press journalists than broadcast ones.

With regard to the journalistic relationship between objectivity and complex agency, I assert that discourse is a structured structuring structure by means of which social actors employ language to construct a social reality not at odds with and unthreatening to the shared social, historical, and cultural structures that inhabit the 'habitus'. Objectivity overlaps and complexly interacts with other institutional 'rules of the game' such as outsiderliness, impartiality, 'seeing', time

and centring. In this case, the habitus is the subset of British foreign correspondence. Rather than find an 'objective' answer to the issues posed here, I am interested in how journalists themselves think, talk and work with these ideas to produce their professional work. This methodological consideration is articulated at greater length in Chapter Three.

I used the pertinent example of the *Columbia Journalism Review* intern in the form of an interview question to elicit responses that demonstrate how each foreign correspondent's practice. Another question I put to the interviewees is what they thought about the self-image of a foreign correspondent as an outsider (interview question 3).

These two broad questions led to the conceptual aggregated categories of history and emotion, unconscious emotion and embedded journalism, thus providing a more nuanced, subtle complex analysis of journalistic interpretations of objectivity as 'rules of the game' and 'feelings for the game'.

2.4: Journalistic trauma

A second important debate that connects media theory with journalistic practice centres on trauma. The Dart Centre for Journalism and Trauma was set up in 2001 to improve the reporting of violence, conflict and trauma, to raise journalistic awareness of compassion. The respondents' awareness of and stances on the Dart Centre for Journalism and Trauma are operationalized in interview question 6. The emergence of a new reflexive journalistic culture suggests, maybe, that objectivity is now complicated, and to some extent questioned, as an ethical model for reporting war, conflict and trauma. For example, new discourses propose that propose that trauma is the immediate 'feel of truth' that objectivity cannot approach except scientifically and coldly, at a 'distance'.

Hernandez describes traumatic mental breakdown as follows:

‘A precipitous interplay of cognitive and affective dimensions, a heightened tension between the intense identifications elicited and the need experienced for some protective distance from the pain invoked undermine the stability of the boundaries between witnessing and telling, event and historical narration, narrative and reading’. (Hernandez, 1998)

Trauma is a key concept because it sheds light on and unlocks how specific, subjective articulations of experience in the interviews and autobiographies emotionally attach to other ‘rules of the game’, such as objectivity, witnessing and compassion. Hernandez’ definition of traumatic experience underlines the relationship between objective distance as a safe, protective boundary and more ‘proximate’ witnessing; between immediate, affective witnessing and reporting as a less time-dependent form of mediation and narrative formation. The journalistic debate about ‘distance’ and witnessing is discussed below (2.4).

Given that much of what foreign correspondents cover is conflict, war and horror, their practices reveal the complex agency involved. How do British foreign correspondents describe and manage traumatic events? Their answers are presented below in Chapter Five. Trauma studies in academic literature tend to look at trauma either as a psychoanalytic issue or as an objective, psychological, scientific phenomenon. The former takes more account of subjectivity and agency. The most simple definition of trauma is:

‘... a deeply distressing or disturbing experience; emotional shock following a stressful event or a physical injury, that may lead to long-term neurosis’.⁹

Trauma is a bodily experience, an experience that temporarily suspends our mental defences. In 1980, the American classificatory system of disease admitted the term ‘post-traumatic stress disorder’, or PTSD (*Diagnostic and Statistical Manual*, 3rd edition, 1981). This was due to the number of Vietnam veterans who had been experiencing similar symptoms. However, it is arguably a disorder that was recorded as far back as recorded history allows. The liberal discourse of trauma regards trauma as an intrusion on the self, an unwelcome intruder that will not

⁹ <http://oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/trauma?q=trauma>, accessed 25 June 2013.

settle down and will not go away. It is often regarded as an intervention of the 'outside' on the 'inside'.

As Meek (2010) argues, traumatic intrusion can be a cultural phenomenon as much as an individual one. If trauma is a cultural phenomenon, it is important to look at how foreign correspondents seek out trauma in their stories to ask whether there is something traumatic in the culture of the observers, as well as the cultures of those observed. As stated above, for the Frankfurt School, including Benjamin, as well as Bauman, Foucault and Zizek, there is a traumatic flaw in the Enlightenment project, from which objectivity emerged as a powerful institutional rule of the game that was operationalized through the historical processes of colonialism and imperialism. I want to operationalize trauma as a key concept because of its relationship with objectivity. As pointed out in the Introduction, objectivity and trauma are both dissociative, strangers to sociation, as Bauman (1991) would put it.

Trauma is a difficult concept to operationalize because of its heavy diagnostic property. Theorized scientifically and psychoanalytically, it is a concept that empowers the diagnostician and exploits the vulnerability of the diagnosed. It is, in other words, a reification of a more simple concept, intense fear or panic. Tester (2013) successfully circumnavigates this analytic problem simply by applying a different, less loaded concept, that of panic. Being aware of this problem, I asked interviewees two types of question, one directly about trauma (question 5), and the other more indirectly invoking other foreign correspondent documented experiences of fear and mental breakdown (question 4).

From a political economic perspective, with the increased commercialization and corporatization of institutional news media, trauma is arguably becoming a news value itself, as it often contains a potent hybrid of other news values including negativity, threshold, frequency and human interest. But such a perspective simplifies the role of all foreign correspondents as purveyors, maybe even performers, of trauma. A more complex question to ask is whether foreign correspondents, by witnessing trauma, by being proxies for the audience, enable audiences to see conflict and crisis from afar, making their subjective experiences suddenly objective, and providing a kind of psychic shock.

I am interested in trauma because it is an emotional experience sometimes experienced, sometimes witnessed by foreign correspondents, sometimes both,

that disrupts the boundary between witnessing and reporting conflict as well as the boundary between individual and culture (Meek, 2010; Alexander et al., 2004). Is trauma becoming a new means of mediating truth that allows a different deployment of emotion for foreign correspondents? Trauma is an emotional phenomenon that raises important issues in the use of emotion when reporting conflict. It is a human intrusion that some argue should not be reported and can be intrusive on journalists themselves, having serious implications for their work and mental health. The biologization of trauma, and of emotion per se, comes up against an empirical problem – not all people respond to an emotional stimulus in the same way. This research does not prefer the biological approach to a socio-cultural perspective on emotion. But it does not deny its power as a discourse. So, the thesis tries to puncture the sedimented boundary between objectivity and social construction, between biology and culture by operationalizing emotion as the chief analytic tool.

Trauma is a delicate ethical issue that is taken up in Chapter Five. One of the symptoms of PTSD is avoidance of circumstances resembling or associated with the stressful traumatic event, clearly a potential interference in a foreign correspondent's work. The Dart Centre for Journalism and Trauma, has undertaken to raise journalistic awareness of this issue and provide formal platforms for discussion on the topic. This is taken up in depth in 5.3 below. I asked interviewees (interview question 6) whether they knew about the Dart Centre and whether they used it or subscribed to its aims. There has been some historical reluctance to accept PTSD, and a degree of resistance to therapy culture in general. Some physicians and psychiatrists have claimed that it is not a real condition, or at least it is a condition that can be attributed to unstable, damaged personalities, who have been prone to 'traumatic' emotional experience from a formative age. This is one of the hypothetical variants investigated in this research, particularly through the voice of Fergal Keane.

Caruth (1995) suggests that traumatic symptoms 'tell us of a reality or truth that is not otherwise available', a different kind of objectivity, maybe. Is this the 'feel of truth' lacking in objective reporting, according to Peters and Carey? As argued above (2.2), Muhlmann (2007) invokes a similar debate. Muhlmann distinguishes between 'centring' and 'decentring' journalism, where the former locates conflict outside of his/her individual agency, or, at least, attempts to block

any connection between his/her 'inner' conflict and externality, a kind of deictic 'them' and 'us' (2007). This is in line with Bauman's formulation of the radical presence of the stranger, which I put forward as one of the rules of the foreign correspondent game.

Decentring journalism admits conflict that disturbs the traumatic triumphalism of 'we' over 'them'. It reconfigures the historical and shifting relationship, not accepting as read that 'they' are completely different from or inferior to 'we', or that inside-outside relations are ordered and separate. Decentring pays more self-reflexive attention to the self in the role of the observer as well as the observed Other. Discursively, decentring journalism is more open to the Other, is dialogic, and temporally and spatially dynamic. Decentring journalism has the potential to enrich its objective agency, not to disavow it. Decentring journalism is more autopoietic¹⁰ in the sense that a decentring journalist understands himself as both the producer and the product of news culture. However, I will adhere here to a theoretical model of complex agency that broadly constitutes a continuum from political to objective, upon which reside multiple, competing points of subjectivity, often in clusters. A more extended exegesis of complex agency is given below (2.8).

Trauma recodes journalistic practice as primarily affective. It provides new evidence of the veracity of the pained mind and body of the journalist. It interrupts unconscious, routine, ordered objectivity. It is an embodied experience produced by shared pain (of observed sufferers and the suffering observer) that will leave its trace in the journalistic body for significantly longer than usual, from months to years, even in some cases for a lifetime. This is evident in many foreign correspondent autobiographies analysed in Chapter Seven.

Trauma goes to the heart of institutional 'rules of the game' and complex agency. It goes without saying that war is traumatic, so reporting war is traumatic too. Or does it? If, as a war reporter, trauma seemingly happens only to the subjects of reports and not the mediators, this reproduces a flattened, mechanistic mode of objective agency, which most of my interviewees regard as unethical. But,

¹⁰ Poiesis is a Greek term that means production and autopoiesis means autoproduction. Varela, Maturana and Uribe (1974) use the term to understand living beings as systems that ceaselessly produce themselves. Therefore, it can be said that an autopoietic system is at the same time the producer and the product.

if the journalist starts to recognize and connect with individual, traumatized people in his/her practice, she is more likely to become traumatized and then his/her trusted ability to convey objective truth is threatened. The emphasis of the news report may switch to a production of emotion rather than presentation of facts.

Kaplan (2008: 4) notes that trauma research takes little account of how 'one's degree of proximity to the event affects its impact'. She therefore, develops a five-step theory:

- (i) Direct experience of trauma (trauma victim)
- (ii) Relative or close friend of trauma victim
- (iii) Direct observation by a bystander of another's trauma
- (iv) Clinician hearing a patient's trauma narrative
- (v) Visually and verbally related trauma

Note here the importance of proximity to trauma, from direct unprotected experience in terms of space and time to several spatially and temporally mediated stages away from the source of the trauma. By comparing the main interview research findings with the key theoretical arguments, Chapter Five will explore what decision-making processes are invoked when correspondents choose how closely to attach themselves to or distance themselves from trauma. Kaplan's spatial model echoes Peters' schema of media witnessing *in*, *by* and *through*, explained in the next section.

To sum up, trauma theoreticians fall into two broad camps that resemble the two groups identified above for witnessing (see 2.3). The first camp understands trauma as an objective human manifestation that has the 'feel of truth' (Caruth, 1996); and the Other as a dramatized acting out of subjective agency – thus, fictional and performative (Meek, 2010). For the latter group, trauma is, as Žižek, using Lacan, might argue, the squeezing or wringing of truth out of symbolic fiction to extrapolate the Real; the torturing of language to reveal truth.

The next section now looks at the relationships between 'distance', witnessing and time.

2.5: Journalistic ‘distance’, witnessing and time

Journalistic work involves ‘covering’ the crisis-ridden lives of others. Hence, and as argued above, issues of distance and mediation are central to both journalistic work and to the work of media theory. Witnessing is a central theory and practice of mediating crises that runs the gamut of civil inattention to bodily testament. Civil inattention tends towards a reflexive agency that sees itself acting from the outside and bodily testament understands itself as more embodied, sensory affective, feeling compassion and suffering with the Other; an acknowledgement of local, particular pain. As with the two central debates outlined so far, objectivity-as-value versus objectivity-as-practice and the ethics of trauma journalism, objectivity is at the heart of the debate about ‘distance’ and witnessing.

Four hundred years ago, Montaigne (2004) theorized that our ability to feel sympathy with others was (and may still be) directly proportionate to our proximity to them. In his essay, ‘Of Friendship’, he claimed that the language of emotion is embedded in a discourse of spatial intimacy. We feel “close to”, “attached to” and “touched” by others.

Today, scientific research supports Montaigne’s thesis. Rizzolatti has co-authored a paper in *Science* (2009: 403-6) concluding that different sets of mirror neurons fire depending on whether rhesus monkeys are witnessing actions inside or outside their immediate space (the space within the range of their grasp). In the 1960s, Milgram conducted experiments on people’s willingness to obey authority figures, concluding that we feel less sympathy with someone distant. So what does this mean for foreign correspondents who may feel sympathy with victims of conflict and want to translate sympathy into empathy and maybe even action? For some, it points to the need for on-the-ground human engagement, bodily proximal testimony and not so-called ‘hotel’ journalism. For others, such close encounter invites fear and hostility that will interrupt a more objective news report.

The relationship between emotion and self is a complex one. This dilemma or conflict is also framed by media analysts as being between the inner and outer world; inner and outer emotion (Gitlin, 2002). I recognize that the philosophical inner/outer debate is a historically vexatious one, especially for philosophers of

mind and language. However, it is important for this thesis to clarify theoretically the distinction and its permutations in how the fourteen interviews demonstrate that 'distance' has been constituted and practiced.

I adopt Tester's useful sociological distinction (2013: 80-9) between the reflexive self, as if from the outside, as narratively self-ordering and self-defining (Giddens: 1991), and the narcissistic self, as if from the inside, as a relatively fragmented self made up of 'isolated acts and events' (Lasch, 1984: 96). These theoretical formulations are clearly different, but not necessarily mutually exclusive. I wanted to test reflexivity and narcissism by asking the respondents eighteen structured questions leading to other semi-structured, more contingent, contextual questions about how their constitutions of self and distance are practiced. Do understandings of reflexive agency translate into rules of the institutional game? Do the respondents attribute narcissism to sensationalist agency and deny its presence in good objective practice?

From a political economic perspective, competition in the field of foreign correspondence may well lead to correspondents narcissistically competing with each other not only to win scoops but to perform in such a way that garners audience attention. Putting more of the self into the story could be a way of deploying narcissism. This is a key concern of this thesis, to discuss how elite foreign correspondents constitute their practice as recognized, popular journalists, for whom a degree of narcissism may give them a competitive advantage. The theoretical concerns of narcissism and reflexivity are built into interview question 13. Narcissistic and reflexive concerns permeate all the main analytic chapters (Four to Seven), in discussion of institutional 'rules of the game', trauma, emotional attachments and life narratives, and the conclusion (Chapter Eight).

The reflexive self, an imagined sense of self as an object viewed from outside the self, is a rule of the game that tries to prevent the narcissistic self from intruding on the story, in order to facilitate an impartial message to the audience. The question arises, does instrumentalizing and objectifying the self, lead to an objectification of people in foreign correspondent reports, a reduction in emotional and political engagement with suffering others and a form of dissociation from them? On the other hand, how does a more narcissistic self, as if from the inside, demonstrate in foreign correspondent reports that emotionally it attaches more credibly with people's suffering?

This research asks if reflexivity and narcissism are operational in foreign correspondent discourse as it constitutes itself and its selves. Do the two modes of subjectivity constitute themselves as mere passive objects or as active subjects? Where is the space for compassion in British foreign correspondent agency? Reflexivity as a rule of the game, as a way of constituting oneself as outside a traumatic conflict, lends itself to being an outsider, a stranger. Narcissism as a rule of the game lends itself to self-regarding importance as well as celebrity. So these two potential 'rules of the game' could well impose contradictory demands on elite British foreign correspondents.

Bauman theorizes the role of the anonymous *stranger* as ambivalent rebel against 'this cosy antagonism, this conflict-torn collusion' of us (inside) and them (outside), of friends and enemies (1991: 55). Anonymous status, for Bauman, is, however, radically unethical. I infer from his theoretical judgement that he is or would be against the ideal of a foreign correspondent as reflexive stranger or outsider, looking down ambivalently on conflicts, wars and crises. I claim that Bauman would demarcate such a practice as cultural imperialism. The intellectual as outsider may well also be a problematic rule of the game of institutional academic practice (Pels, 2000). But would Bauman advocate a more narcissistic agency, which, as argued by Meek and Derrida, may involve a 'fantasm of inclusion' (Smith). This theme will be revisited in Chapter Three (3.3: 'Outsider Issues').

Being an outsider is a concealed radical position of power. One of the 'rules of the game' of the foreign correspondent as stranger, *pace* objective journalist, is to appear as the voice that bridges and communicates local, particular conflicts to the imagined, internalized national community (Anderson, 1983) and the domestic, home audience: a centring discourse. This ties in with Lasch's theory of cultural narcissism (primarily attributed to inward-looking American culture) and Lichter et al.'s study of journalists leading an 'insider's life with an outsider's self-image' (see Chapter Two). Do British foreign correspondents play a similar role? In order to appear foreign, to represent foreignness, a foreign correspondent has to convince his audience that he is 'inside' international conflicts in the sense that he has engaged with local actors, victims and perpetrators, to select the desirable political factual information, sometimes the vicarious 'experience' of conflict and trauma, while remaining detached from and uninvolved in the conflict. As Muhlmann argues (see 2.3 above), foreign correspondents often frame their discourse on conflict in

order to constitute the audience as at a safe vantage point outside conflict. However, this enactment of objectivity is made more precarious through the intense emotional unfolding of violence and trauma around the correspondent, depending of course, how distant or close s/he is to the conflict.

When a foreign correspondent witnesses a foreign conflict, how does s/he constitute himself internally and externally? When witnessing trauma, the external stimulus overrides the internal to such an extent that shielding oneself from the trauma is paramount. In other words, objectifying oneself screens the outside world, but may also lead to narcissism by self-monitoring, looking in, rather than looking out. This seems to be an argument for putting the reflexive self before the narcissistic one. In order to constitute doing one's job properly, being at a safe dissociative distance from conflict may be the only way to try to stop being interrupted by feelings of doubt, fear and panic. And doing one's job properly whether in an institutional or an independent context, means internalizing rules such as objectivity and truth, both of which are political agencies. Chapter Five will contextualize fourteen constitutions of self, distance and witnessing and analyse them against the main theoretical concerns.

Nearness is a moral and aesthetic concern, as well as a spatial one. Bauman's theorization of the ambivalent stranger, mapped on to the agency of foreign correspondence, de-ethicalizes the space of the Other articulated by the journalistic agent; it avoids 'sociation' and empathy (Bauman, 1991). Such a stance necessarily relegates empathy to its performance and the possibility of false emotional engagement; a theatrical spectacle of self-mediation for the ironic spectator (Chouliaraki, 2013). This raises questions about media production values, such as the journalistic performance of emotion, trauma and empathy, as well as the dangers of foreign correspondents producing formulaic reports of suffering and trauma for infotainment geared more towards audiences back home, than sincere emotional engagement with the subjects of reports.

Four media analysts have theorized distant suffering: Stanley Cohen, Lilie Chouliaraki, Luc Boltanski and Roger Silverstone. Cohen (2001: 18) is concerned with responsiveness to the needs of strangers. He makes the case that our own local and national society is much more multi-dimensionally knowable than mass-mediated information about other societies that consists of 'one-dimensional' headlines, sound-bites and fifty-second TV clips. From this it follows that television

reports of distant suffering create knowledge but also a wall between knowledge and action:

‘It is not natural to step out of the rhythms of private life in your own society to engage with these distant issues. And the channels through which this information is conveyed – whether the mass media, a direct mailing or a public appeal – are so structured that they can be easily segmented from the rest of life’. (ibid.: 20)

Chouliaraki (2006: 43), acknowledging the gap between knowledge and action and borrowing from Silverstone, asks what is the ‘proper’ distance from which television should invite us to contemplate the humanness of sufferers and the historicity of suffering, another rule of the institutional game. This necessarily invokes another question here: what role do foreign correspondents play in negotiating a ‘proper’ or improper distance? And is there an objective proper distance or should such a distance be more flexible and negotiable?

Silverstone coined the term ‘mediapolis’, as a descriptive and normative category, to refer to the mass mediated space between knowledge and action:

‘The mediapolis is, I intend, the mediated space of appearance in which the world appears and in which the world is constituted in its worldliness, and through which we learn about those who are and who are not like us. It is through communications conducted through the mediapolis that we are constructed as human (or not), and it is through the mediapolis that public and political life increasingly comes to emerge at all levels of the body politic (or not)’. (2007: 31)

He makes the following observation regarding English-language transnational news:

‘Viewers watching Al Jazeera will obviously be seeing a different world from those watching Fox. And those differences are palpable and crippling.

Yet they will be seeing that world through the media, and to a significant degree so do we all'. (ibid.)

Boltanski, like Chouliaraki, is mostly concerned with the agency of spectators of 'distant suffering' rather than foreign correspondents. This is his theoretical position on spatiality and mediation from the point of view of the spectator:

'The person who sees from afar is unaware of people receiving the news, how near they are relative to the case, their readiness to act and whether or not they have precommitments. Each is thereby uncertain as to the existence of a ranked series of persons under an obligation to act to different degrees, as to their possible position in this series, and as to the failure to act of possible helpers higher up in the series for whom they would have to become substitutes'. (1993:16)

As with Caruth's spatial theory outlined in 2.3, a model of 'nearness to the case' can be usefully applied to foreign correspondents (see below). This research focuses on journalists as agents, who have to pay complex attention to suffering, traumatized people, dead people, and to their own trauma – as well as the moulding of all of the aforementioned into a report and to the expectations viewers have of such a report. Do some journalists look in one direction rather than another in order to hold one aspect closer and another at bay? How do they resolve a conflict of interest between perceived institutional and audience needs, needs of their selves and needs of subjects of the report? How do those who embrace objectivity mediate these causes? This will be answered in Chapter Five. From the material, there are many interstitial points of agency, which can be visually represented to show the many relationships or encounters journalists have:

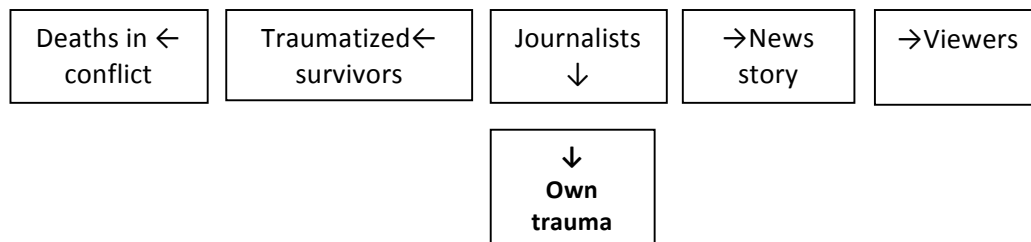


Figure 1: Trauma

The theoretical discussion about spatiality and mediation is complex because it involves two dimensions: physical and ethical/moral, the latter being, arguably, more of an emotional terrain. Proximal and distant suffering is not simply a question of geography. The trajectory of foreign correspondent mediation is from local to global, proximate events relayed to a distant audience. Geographic space is a closed, fixed, absolute category whereas moral space or distance is relatively fluid and subjective. Foreign correspondents are speakers into the air as well as mediators of human proximate suffering for distant audiences. Proximity to events does not necessarily lead to intimacy and private emotion any more than distance leads to depersonalization and indifference. Foreign correspondents face the difficulty of whether to try to dissolve the physical distance into ethical distance or into ethical immediate proximity.

And what of a foreign correspondent who is embedded? How does this affect his/her spatiality and ability to mediate? One of my interviewees, Nic Robertson of CNN, was embedded with the American military in Iraq when I interviewed him by phone, so this provided a useful ‘live’ opportunity to discuss with him the constraints of his agency. This particular aspect of ‘distance’ and witnessing is taken up at the end of Chapter Four because of the nature of embedded journalism as an institutional practice.

There is a complex triangular tension for foreign correspondents between looking at people caught up in traumatic conflict, reporting their observations to an imagined public audience ‘back home’ and attending to their individual roles in relaying their observations, be they objective, compassionate or traumatic; a kind of reflexivity. This complex agency is the theoretical cornerstone of this research. Interview question 13 derives from a quotation by one of my interviewees, Robert

Fisk, who provides his template for spatiality and mediation in terms of distance and identification or recognition:

‘No, I would say, journalism should be a vocation. One could be angry at death, but we were not here to weep. Doctors – and I’m not comparing journalism to the medical profession – don’t cry while they’re operating on the desperately sick. Our job is to record, to point the finger when we can, to challenge those ‘centres of power’ about which Amira Hass has so courageously spoken’. (Fisk, 2006)

I believe that what Fisk is advocating here is a journalistic need not to regard people caught up in suffering as categorical abstractions but real people who probably know only too well what has happened to them but need to know how and why. In Chapter Six, I quote Fisk’s argument that an institutional agent might find it easier to approach the ‘what’ rather than the more difficult ‘how’ and ‘why’. This form of agency mediates the most space, metaphorically, between the sufferers and the audience or viewers. Whereas, what Fisk seeks is political and emotional connection; an active structuring agency rather than a relatively passive, structured one.

Witnessing in newsmaking has been the focus of quite some recent debate. Two distinct witnessing discourses complement each other as much as conflict with each other. The first understands witnessing as non-intimate ‘civil inattention’ (Frosh and Pinchevski, 2009). Borrowing from Goffman, Frosh and Pinchevski argue that civil inattention in media witnessing is morally neutral:

‘To begin with, inattention is ‘civil’. It *recognizes* strangers without singling them out as objects of special curiosity. While Bauman emphasizes that this recognition lacks sympathy and solidarity, Goffman stresses the absence of fear and hostility’. (Frosh and Pinchevski, 2009: 67)

Frosh and Pinchevski (2009) revalidate the distance between journalist and Other as a necessary ethical component of a healthy cosmopolitan, universal society by

regarding intimate human relations as more problematic, conflictual and maybe even traumatic, what they call the 'exclusiveness of intimacy'. This is, broadly speaking, a form of cosmopolitan agency. Their advocacy of distance between journalist and Other particularly fits foreign correspondence that has to stretch communication between self and Other, and also the viewers/readers.

The second media witnessing theory understands witnessing as a form of physical presence, bodily religious testimony (Peters, 2009) or the 'feel of truth' of eyewitnessing:

'Eyewitness accounts have the feel of truth because they are quick, subjective and incomplete, unlike 'objective' or reconstituted history, which is laborious but dead'.¹¹

This kind of witnessing is mediation in-between. Peters offers a schema, outlined in 2.2, of witnessing or testimony *in, by and through* the media (my italics) which spans a gulf of representation from the 'historical' to the 'verisimilar'. 'In media' witnessing is bodily, incorporated, immediate, and problematizes the role of the professional journalist who mediates events. Bodily testament seems to question the efficacy of professional objectivity in favour of something more human, subjective and experiential. Witnesses are in the media, the media bears witness and audiences witness. In terms of spatiality, Peters strongly favours proximate witnessing as opposed to remote witnessing, which virtually invalidates the power of audiences witnessing. On the other hand, Frosh's paradigm case of witnessing sees audiences as included in the same moral universe as reported events, as a more circular kind of civic equivalence.

Journalists work between traumatized survivors and relatively untraumatized audiences or readers, offering the possibility of the media doing the witnessing, and this is where journalistic complex agency lies. Peters' mode of witnessing is conceptually different from a perspectival objective witnessing in terms of spatiality and temporality. For Peters, the more live the act of witnessing is, the more 'truthful'. And the more the journalist witnesses with his/her body, the more emotionally and spiritually present s/he is, the more 'truthful' the witnessing

¹¹ <http://www.abc.net.au/rn/arts/bwritings/stories/s1003556.htm>, accessed 25 June 2013.

is. It could be claimed that trauma, a bodily, biological and psychic phenomenon, is the kind of witnessing Peters aspires to, although trauma is not an issue he discusses. He claims that truth, other people's suffering, is written on the body as a more reliable, less manipulative mediation or witnessing. In other words, the body is the screen, pulling the spectator/reader closer into the TV screen or the newspaper page. Peters' formulation connects with Meek's as witnessing being a kind of traumatic, instinctual experience. The way Frosh's and Peters' arguments are used here becomes clearer in Chapter Five.

According to Meek, trauma can enable a more 'authentic' mode of witnessing that lies outside the 'codes' of mainstream journalism, outside objectivity:

'Recent trauma theory wants to bear witness to authentic forms of testimony that directly transmit experience outside the codes and conventions of mainstream media'. (2010: 1)

Two examples of this cited by Meek are the Holocaust and the events of September 11th 2001. For ethical reasons, he stresses the need for analysis of unconscious structures of political identities rather than assumed identification with, or empathy for, the victim/survivor of trauma. He argues that the latter discourse of identification/empathy is problematic because it 'may participate in structures of power and exclusion' (2010: 1), while regarding itself as progressive and liberal. This analytic problem is built into interview question 12. If his claims are true, then foreign correspondents reporting traumatic events play an important role in an identification with and recognition of certain people's suffering and not with others. This process of identification and recognition is necessarily embedded in the correspondents' own unconscious, traumatic experiences. I will refer to this theory as the 'compassion' model. This view is supported by Zelizer (2002; 2004). She argues that certain events are designated traumatic by being witnessed and worked through by the corporate media; events such as the Jewish Holocaust and, more recently, the 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Centre. The news of the Holocaust, of course, was not disseminated around the world until several years after the event, but it had been recorded to a certain extent nevertheless. Other equally traumatic

events (such as Cambodia, Rwanda or Bosnia) were presented in a more matter-of-fact fashion, which is less likely to facilitate audience identification. Rather, it leads away from empathy and creates more distance.

Meek wants to demonstrate a more unconscious discourse of trauma embedded in repressed violence, alienation, as the basis of both individual and group identity. Again, this is in line with the notion of culturally traumatized agents seeking traumatic stories. The history of this thinking goes back as far as 1913 (*Totem and Taboo*), where Freud discussed trauma as cultural and social. It was then developed by Benjamin and Adorno in their critical theory of the mass media, namely photography and film, in the 1920 and 1930s. These two theorized historical trauma in the context of mass media and mass politics (Adorno's *Prisms* and *Minima Moralia*; Benjamin's *The Arcades Project*).

Meek's (2010: 1) 'unconscious' model of trauma (as opposed to the 'compassion' or the 'transmission' models) ties in with a theoretical frame that problematizes the association of emotion with subjectivity. It offers a more decentring, dialogic frame, spatially and temporally constrained, between self and Other and the emotion that flows dynamically between these assumed polarities (Terada, 2003: Benjamin, 1988).

Countering the 'compassion' model, theorists such as Meek claim that:

'Mediated trauma does not so much carry the traces of the traumatic past as dramatize and act out a crisis of subjective agency'. (2009: 13)

Meek claims that modern media play a crucial role in this crisis because 'they increasingly provide the images through which contemporary identity is negotiated' (ibid.: 13). He argues against the notion of a literal trace of an external reality and the testimony of a traumatized subject as a living embodiment of historical truth. Meek makes the case:

'For not only is our understanding of traumatic experiences and events often complicated by their visual mediation, but traumatic memory and modern visual media have also been theorized as registering, repeating

and re-playing events in ways that exceed conscious perception and understanding'. (2010: 7)

Note Meek's emphasis on visual impact and trauma. As mentioned above, visual impact is an institutional rule of the game. Are foreign correspondents, especially television ones, getting caught up in such a traumatic cultural turn?

Boltanski (1999) theorizes the agency of reporting of 'distant suffering' as containing two dimensions, an immediate 'affective dimension' and an objective witnessing one, which seems to represent a merging of the dual approaches referred to above. His affective dimension incorporates a particular subjective spatiality and temporality, which is experiential. His objective one falls more readily into a centring of discourse around a grand historical contextual narrative that is greater (in the sense of importance) and moves more slowly than immediate human sensory individual experience. Although it is not explicitly stated in his analysis, I interpret this grand historical textual narrative, for journalists, to be the prevailing narrative of their national context. For some, this might be construed rather as an imperialist context. Boltanski's theoretical model is a useful one that can be enhanced by a close examination of what happens in reporting conflict when these two journalistic roles clash, especially when 'distant' suffering may not feel distant at all. The collapse of 'distant' and 'close' spatialities, reporting, say, the 9/11 or 7/7 attacks, could be a decentring experience as well as a traumatic one for a foreign correspondent. However, whether s/he experiences it hotly through her/his body or witnesses it more coldly is open to his or her experience and interpretation.

I asked the interviewees a series of questions with regard to witnessing (interview questions 12 and 8). The first was a journalistic quotation, produced in the context of a discussion about the Bosnian war:

'In reality, trying to be fair and analytical does not at all preclude feeling sympathy for victims, and other human emotions. But for some writers, their emotional commitment seems to exclude all fairness and reasonable analysis. Whatever the political aims of such writers, a matter I cannot judge, their militant rejection of dispassionate analysis can only play into

the hands of political powers who cloak their military interventions in the rhetoric of human imperatives'. (Johnstone, 2005)

This question also led, in some cases, to interesting discussions about identification and compassion. A second question asked whether interviewees thought there were different emotional styles in the British and American styles of reporting 9/11. A third question, as mentioned above, elicited their opinions on the self-image of foreign correspondents as outsiders. I also asked them what they believed was the difference between a professional witness and a naïve informant. My interviewees have very different approaches to this topic and their narratives are taken up at length in Chapter Five.

Time is important in talking about witnessing and trauma because of a theoretical distinction between subjective experience of time and objective time as a universal, 'durable good' (Hoskins, 2004). For Hoskins, the former is a 'more complex multi-layered *durée* of time' or 'particularity'. For me, this is a distinction between the grand narrative of History and subjective life narrative experiences. Time, from a subjective and objective point of view, is a factor that can be especially at odds with objectivity during an international crisis and can affect agency. In other words, is individual experience emerging as an institutional rule of the game? For institutional journalists, all stories have to be written for fixed, tight deadlines. This is a norm and rule of professional, journalistic practice, the division of a journalist's labour. From a political economic perspective, it makes sound economic sense because time is money (Tuchman, 1973). But from the perspective of the journalist, do deadlines constrain or enhance his/her agency? Is there a particular relationship between journalistic agency, temporal constraint and international crisis? For example, most everyday TV news bulletins last no more than about 120 seconds. Does the compression of information retrieval time and its relaying into virtual sound bites constrain a journalist's agency and make him or her more instrumental or does it lead to a new kind of agency, a particular, subjective experience of space and time? When an international crisis is breaking, does s/he have more time to put something less prewritten and less formulaic into the report? Or, is the most relevant constraint the actual demand made on journalists for instant analysis? This forms part of what I wish to explore through my research questions to foreign correspondents (see interview question 7).

I would like to draw out one or two conceptual threads that relate to the historical period since the inception of 24-hour news, starting with CNN's reporting of the Gulf War in 1990. Firstly, in terms of time, these mediated events are marked by their immediacy (Hoskins, 2004). Hoskins argues that the increased mobility of journalists and their improved technological ability to report in real-time from or near to the event they are covering have become more influential in newsmaking practice. This can have repercussions with regard to witnessing, a point that is pursued in Chapter Five (5.2). Hoskins argues that television is now the dominant medium for communicating contemporary events. He also maintains that the demand for immediacy and live on-location reporting is contributing to a 'dumbing down' of news content and, in particular, to direct constraints on 'the ability of journalists to perform their jobs effectively' Swain (cited in Hoskins, 2001: 46) also maintains:

'Television has become a 24-hour slog with the result that many of today's TV reporters may have all the traditional dedication and intrepidity of their predecessors, they cannot use it. They are tied to the satellite dish on the hotel roof ready to deliver 'live spots' and so are unable to explore in depth the stories they are supposed to be reporting'.

If what Hoskins argues is true, increased television journalistic influence through technology and decrease in quality of content surely makes journalistic agency more challenging and potentially more traumatic, especially in conflict zones. My research would like to test this hypothesis in the light of recent international crises. Do British foreign correspondents agree that technological and temporal demands constrain 'effective' journalism or make it more influential?

Immediacy is another aspect of mass news' contrived use of time. Breaking news and news simplified to headlines and sound bites sets out to give the consumer the impression that news is unmediated, truthful and objective. It forms part of journalistic agency to the extent that journalists steer their practice to meet the perceived need of an imagined audience. Speed becomes the chief imperative, often at the expense of balance, selectivity and even, sometimes, accuracy (Putnam, 2003). The result is that the viewers become bombarded with information

that they have precious little time to process and to make connections with their own lives, especially when their lives are so busy and time-constrained.

According to Fiske (1987), immediacy is used 'not only to mask the production of news but also to promote television over press and to divert attention from its means of gathering and distribution'. Clearly his analysis is of a political economic nature. The time between the occurrence of a conflict event and its broadcasting has been shrinking to the extent that live, real-time news during an international crisis has almost become *de rigueur*. Immediacy, theoretically, literally denotes pure unmediated, unadulterated truth or reality, which is often reinforced in an international conflict with live pictures, producing spectacle. However, in practice, is this possible? If a foreign correspondent is behaving more immediately, what does that mean for his/her subjectivity and agency? A pertinent recent example of this might be the reporting of the Egyptian uprising in 2012. According to Fiske, immediacy and objectivity go together:

'Hand in glove with objectivity go authenticity and immediacy. Both these link news values in particular with qualities of television in general. For authenticity links with 'realisticness', and immediacy with 'nowness' or 'liveness', both of which are central to the experience of television. In news, both work to promote the transparency fallacy and to mask the extent of the construction or interpretation that news involves'. (ibid: 289)

Objective media practice is becoming obsessed with immediacy, denying mediation arguably because it attempts to deny its agency in making history (Callinicos, 1987). By presenting information as immediate and 'unmediated' pictures, the illusion of objectivity can be created.

Hoskins (2001) argues that the new intensity of war reporting has eroded and disturbed the time it takes us to take in events and work them into memories. He seems to be addressing contemporary global audiences, whereas this research is more concerned with how this new constraint of the use of time in an international crisis affects journalists, in particular how they perceive it to affect them. Hoskins believes that TV immediacy dumbs down content and inhibits journalistic agency, though making it more influential and impactful on viewers. Fiske argues that it is

primarily news content that is affected by immediacy. This research would like to put both assumptions to the test. One manifestation of journalistic trauma is the kind of trauma that entails a temporary loss of affective bonds and emotional attachment between the 'inner' journalist and the external environment – in other words, total detachment, a kind of temporary blocking of suffering from becoming conscious. The classical, 'objective' school of journalism still maintains that detachment is a prerequisite for impersonal, neutral and objective reporting, but can a traumatized journalist remain objective? In psychoanalytic terms, when we experience trauma, we regress to a survival consciousness. In the interest of survival, we temporarily sever our external links and enter a hermetically sealed inner world in order to go into 'fight or flight' mode. If we accept the premise that journalists are experiencing as well as reporting trauma, this problematizes how a traumatic event is reported. Seeing as the language of trauma and emotion is beginning to percolate into mainstream journalistic circles, is this a questioning of one of the main tenets of traditional journalism? It is an area that seems to warrant academic attention. The establishment of the Dart Centre for Journalism and Trauma (5.3) in North America and Europe, indicates an implicit institutional acknowledgement that trauma is adversely affecting the ability of journalists to operate during international crises.

According to Kate Adie, 24-hour rolling news tends to more emotional experimentation because it simply has more time to fill. Perhaps this different kind of coverage has to do with an excess of temporal constraint, a demand for 'liveness'? Is it the case that ongoing 24-hour coverage and interpretation of events cannot easily be reduced to prewritten news narratives and so openness and contingency forestall closure? Another argument is that immediacy constitutes a denial of '*longue durée*' process-based historicity by reifying fragmented events (that become dislocated memories for viewers), distorting history, representing 'ahistory', an attempt to repeatedly locate the individual viewing subject and consumer at the beginning of history. It is like a manufactured attention deficit disorder because there is no time for mediation. This nowness or immediacy becomes a powerful signifier of truth and reality, which projects affect onto the journalist and his/her audience. International crisis and immediacy seem to connote grave seriousness and an excess of reality, an inescapable palpable danger. But we are talking about a safe, secure grave seriousness for the viewer at home

ensconced on the sofa in his/her voyeuristic vantage position. The journalist plays the role of shoring up and sanitizing political inconsistencies and complications for the audience by presenting a highly structured narrative reality in which the viewer does not have to do any work. This is the function of another news value that comes out of international crisis, that of unambiguity. Just like fast food or ready-made meals, the consumer eats only for his/her pleasure and does not have to worry about the process of preparing the ingredients of the meal. The journalist, of course, has the agency of, if you will forgive the wordplay, providing the happy meal, low cost but low nutritional value. When journalists are in a situation where immediate content is demanded but there is little time to garner more facts and contextual information, often in traumatic conditions that require immediate 'escapology', is their agency not compromised? Norval captures the phenomenon well:

'In a moment of organic crisis, one becomes acutely aware of the dislocation in the structure, in the sense that one has an 'experience' which makes visible the ultimate contingency of all forms of identification'.
(Norval, 1996)

This idea lends weight to Meek's understanding of trauma as more unconscious than identificatory. Trauma needs to be worked through if it is going to lead to a new empathic insight. During a crisis, a human being simply does not have time to process trauma. Craving order, human beings become extremely vulnerable during a crisis to political discourses that promise to restore coherence by offering themselves as myths – separate from the otherwise unintelligible crisis.

Perhaps there are moments emerging when journalistic norms do not function as usual, that allow for a different type of news text to be written, a different account of reality to be performed? Perhaps these moments have to do with some kind of international 'crisis' such as 9/11, the Asian tsunami, the Bali bombing of 2005, the Madrid bombing of 2004, the Beslan school massacre or the 7th July London bombings, where cracks are appearing in the Western media monopoly of manufactured consent, all of which may constitute a collapse of the ruling interpretative structure and an aggregate ceding of articulation to non-

official voices. A fascinating contemporary example of this is the 2011 political uprisings in Egypt, Tunisia, Syria and Libya where the 'ordinary' people are participating in the mediation and witnessing of the events as well as in the events themselves. Phil Graham, (1963, cited in Thomas, 2000: 383) talked about journalists writing the first rough draft of history which oddly builds trust with the audience (Tester, 2001). So, the concept of journalist is in need of redefinition.

Time is a critical dimension of international crisis reporting. Perhaps television-media articulated critical moments allow for a more emotional, individual, personal voice and style than is usual from journalists. Perhaps they produce moments that demand more of the journalist him or herself and break open the mould of diurnal news coverage. This leads to journalistic issues of time and emotion: the desire to scoop (in a competitive political economic context), machismo, danger and fear, maybe even trauma. And how does journalistic trauma impinge on compassionate agency? This will be answered in Chapter Six. The issue of gender and machismo was mobilized in interview question 9 and is discussed in Chapter Five.

A question I put to my respondents (interview question 7) was how the use of time affected their journalistic agency, especially the truncation of time and the demand for liveness and immediacy.

2.6: Journalistic compassion

The fourth debate that informs this thesis' discussion of journalistic agency and subjectivity in British foreign correspondence revolves around journalism(s) of attachment. This debate in the media analytic literature as well as journalistic practice has subjective as well as political strands. Hence, journalism of attachment is also meaningfully connected with advocacy journalism, peace journalism, human rights journalism and political activism. As in Sections 2.3, 2.4 and 2.5, the theoretical and practical debate about journalistic compassion hinges on the central problem of objectivity.

The *OED* provides a twofold definition of compassion: 'suffering together with another' and 'the feeling or emotion, when a person is moved by the suffering

or distress of another, and by the desire to relieve it'.¹² There are politically different meanings of the human experience of compassion: suffering with others and being moved by pity, not suffering oneself with but having a desire to relieve others' suffering. Compassion is a social and ethical imperative. Compassion as a philosophical value can be traced back throughout recorded human history, to the Ancient Egyptians, early Hinduism, Judaism, Islam and Christianity. According to Sznajder (1998: 121), contemporary compassion emerged historically from the exigency of market economies and contractual social relationships. Market expansion increased the sphere of strangers, shaping moral obligations to strangers in public civil society and liberal democracy. Contemporary or modern compassion then arose out of the historical development of capitalism. This ideological definition leaves out an important emotional dimension of compassion, which is not just as a means to an economic end, and which predates the rise of capitalism in Western human history:

'In languages that derive from Latin, 'compassion' means: we cannot look on coolly as others suffer; or, we sympathize with those who suffer ... In languages that form the word 'compassion' not from the root 'suffering' but from the root 'feeling', the word is used in approximately the same way but ... with another light ... a broader meaning: to have compassion (co-feeling) means not only to live with the other's misfortune but also to feel with him any emotion'. (Kundera, 1984: 20)

Kundera's definition partly matches the *OED* one. Where it differs is through the idea that compassion can be identification with any emotion experienced by someone suffering. So, this definition has a different emphasis in that the sufferer takes the emotional lead and the non-suffering Other plays a passive co-feeling role. This issue is probed below in Chapter Six.

What makes compassion interesting for this research is that, by definition, it articulates a potential emotional attachment between the self and the Other, between the foreign correspondent as agent and the human 'subjects' of his/her

¹² <http://oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/compassion?q=compassion>, accessed 25 June 2013.

objective report, which is bypassed by the dispassion of objectivity. I say 'subjects' because, if compassion were to take place, then the relationship might be described as more intersubjective, a 'co-feeling' between subjects. Although compassion enables identification, it is partial, not complete identification. Compassion seems to rest on the fact that it is difficult to feel compassion for people with whom one is intimate because it intersubjectively disrupts the necessary boundary between the self and Other of compassion. In general, compassion is more thought of in the public realm. Compassion needs a certain distance, but is relatively closer to the Other than objectivity. So, as an analytic concept, how does it fit into the journalistic 'rules of the game'? As claimed above, there is a potential conflict of interest between objective, reflexive and narcissistic agencies, and compassion or empathy. This is discussed in Chapters Six and Seven.

The precarious nature of compassion's relationship with emotion is usefully referred to by Hannah Arendt who argues that once the occasion that arouses compassion dissolves, so does the feeling of outrage (Arendt, 1973: 24). Hence, the time-based efficacy of compassionate agency. It is latent, contingent or contextual, often entangled and cannot be summoned at will. This underlines the fact that compassion is an intersubjective emotion that is subject to complex agency, subject to occasion or context as well as person, and subject to unconscious cultural processes. Where compassionate agency differs from traumatic agency is that compassion offers the emotional space to associate with the Other, the subject(s) of the foreign correspondent report, rather than estrange or disassociate.

Tester, using Bourdieu's theory of the journalistic field, locates compassion in the sociological field of practice. For Bourdieu, a 'field of journalistic practice' is:

'... a structured social space, a field of forces, a force field. It contains people who dominate and others who are dominated. Constant, permanent relationships of inequality operate inside this space, which at the same time becomes a space in which the various actors struggle for the transformation or preservation of the field'. (Bourdieu, 1998: 40)

According to Bourdieu, individual agency only operates within the confines of the field of journalistic practice:

‘The argument has been that the travails and tribulations of individual photographers or journalists should not be read as statements of individual, psychological and personal failures or anxieties. Rather, they should be read *sociologically*’. (2001: 27)

Bourdieu believes that the journalistic field is split between sensationalism and objectivity. Sensationalism secures legitimacy through popularity and profitability, and objectivity garners legitimacy through peer recognition. Tester concurs:

‘... the two logics – towards compassion and impartiality – do not necessarily go together’. (2001: 25)

Tester agrees with Bourdieu’s conflict in the journalistic field between ‘pure’ and market-led journalistic practice. Tester uses the example of Don McCullin as a war photographer identified and lauded by his peers as an elite journalist, ‘the persistent producer of authoritative commentary’ (2001: 24), as the epitome of objective agency, and so occupying a position of dominance within the journalistic community. This is a striking example because, despite his strong peer recognition, McCullin (2002) has disclosed a large amount of personal trauma and breakdown as a result of his work in the field of photojournalism, which came to light after his work in the field.

Tester makes the claim that sensationalism tends to prevail for economic reasons, creating an ‘ambiguous ethical position’ for the journalist between the strategic, public and professional ritual of peer-recognized objectivity and compassionate concerns that are pushed into a subjective, private and individual sphere. In fact, sensationalism can be construed as a form of emotionality usurped by market forces. The latter concerns are closer to human attachment, something that was not seemingly directly recognized by Bourdieu (2001: 25). Martin Bell, former BBC foreign correspondent, declared after his experience of reporting the Balkan Wars that:

‘... journalism – not only in the war zones and amid human suffering, but perhaps especially there – is not a neutral and mechanical undertaking but in some sense a moral enterprise’. (1998:18)

This was a radical shift in Bell’s journalistic ideals, away from BBC institutional ones, a public advocacy for journalism of attachment and against ‘bystander’ journalism, that arguably made it impossible for him to continue in the profession. Bell makes clear, however, that attachment is not desirable at the expense of objectivity, nor is objectivity desirable at the expense of ethical reporting:

‘Journalism of attachment enables compassion but not at the expense of facts, because certain facts require and demand a certain ethical response’.
(cited in Tester, 2001:24-6)

For theorists such as Bourdieu and Tester, there is a qualitative difference between journalism of attachment and sensationalism. Sensationalism, for them, puts paid to objectivity and derives from commercial interest rather than journalistic discretion. According to them, increased competition has led TV broadcasters to become more sensational. Tester puts forward the BBC foreign correspondent, Fergal Keane, as an example of the process of ‘reduction of complex phenomena and events to the immediate responses and feelings of a few individuals’ (2001: 27). Tester claims this ‘reduction’ is manifest in Keane’s book, *Letter to Daniel: Dispatches from the Heart* (1996), an autobiographical account of his experience of foreign correspondence as well as his personal life in the UK. My understanding of Tester’s claim about Keane is that there is a narcissistic agency at work in Keane’s reporting, which constrains objectivity. This point will be taken up in Chapters Five and Six where, it is hoped, Keane’s voice will cast new, interesting light on this issue. The intersection of emotional agency and autobiography will be taken up in Chapter Seven. It is important to note here, however, that there may be a degree of slippage on Tester’s part between how a journalist such as Keane reports in the field (primary discourse), i.e. sensationally or not, and what he discloses in a memoir about his professional experience. This is complex agency, different agencies operating in different contexts. What journalists do and say may

not be the same thing, a problem that applies to this research and its secondary discursive nature (see Chapter Three).

Where journalistic autobiographies play an important, intriguing part for this research is in cross-referencing journalists' ideas about their practice of reporting conflict and trauma. I asked Keane whether there was a connection between the alleged narcissism and sensationalism of his foreign correspondence, his celebrated compassion and his experience of trauma in the journalistic field. It is of striking importance that Keane stands out from the objective BBC pack in his advocacy of compassion, but is the most criticized for being emotional. This could be another institutional rule of the game, the alienation and trivialization of partial voices by impartial ones, which is clearly evident in the attitude of institutional foreign correspondent voices towards less institutional ones and vice versa. This theme will be taken up further with reference to Keane, Fisk and Pilger in Chapters Six and Seven.

According to Tester (2001: 27), what is missing from Bourdieu's formulation of the journalistic field of practice is 'ethical subjectivity'. This, he claims, has several characteristics. First, it is moulded by the history of the ethic of compassion, of which journalists are the subjects. Secondly, 'bystander journalism' (a phrase coined by Martin Bell) is not ethically good enough. Thirdly, the logic of the market leads to the dominance of sensationalist and human interest stories. Ethical subjectivity maybe suggests another conflict of journalistic interest between the self and the standards of the right or good. It is hard to see the subjective space in this description, the space for individual agency. How about moral subjectivity or moral agency, the 'doing' of ethics, the action of compassion? Nevertheless, Tester does admit that ethical subjectivity may lead to conflict within the journalistic field:

'The difficulty for journalists is that these three sites of virtue do not necessarily fit together. Indeed they tend to divide journalistic practice against itself'. (2001: 28)

I presume that the fault lines for the division of journalistic practice against itself are groups or factions of like-minded individuals and that some groups may be smaller than others, maybe even 'groups' of one. For example, it was evident that

the first series of interviewees (Loyd, Keane, Little and O’Kane) had personal friendship as well as professional connections. This is theorized by Elias as ‘group charisma’ (see Chapter Six). I was also able to exploit the fact that Little is a friend of Bowen to eventually get access to Bowen. As the interviews went on, Pilger was singled out for opprobrium, which was then reciprocated in the interview with him. There was a degree of grudging admiration for him, but negative aspersions were cast on his journalistic professionalism and his alleged propensity for selecting facts for ideological construction. In psychological terms, he emerged very much as the scapegoat, the Other. Fisk, Keane, Loyd and Simpson were all sidelined by certain other journalists for their propensities to narcissism, but by no means as forcefully as Pilger. It is evident that Pilger and Fisk are the most decentring foreign correspondents of the interviewee cohort. Robert Fisk is the single foreign correspondent (in the research group) with a long-term regional speciality who actually lives in the Middle East, in Beirut, Lebanon. He lives outside the West; a fact whose resonance will be examined further in greater depth in Chapter Six.

Tester makes use of Alasdair MacIntyre’s concept of ‘virtue’ to make the point that journalists make themselves answerable to each other only in so far as they successfully perform objectivity but not ‘passionate’ sensationalism:

‘The realization of that particular internal good is more or less predicated on dispassionate observation. In sum then, and as Alasdair MacIntyre says, the good is internal to the practice and the construction by the individual of a character which is oriented towards the realization of that good (that is internal to the practice but wholly external to the individual her or himself) is the basis of virtue’. (2001: 29)

Chapter Six will test this binary model against the interview material to see how the fourteen respondents’ ethical subjectivities have been constructed. I would like to try to de-stigmatize and re-legitimize the concept of sensationalism (as a facet of popular culture) by thinking about it as a form of ‘complex agency’. I agree with Tester (as well as Bourdieu) about this conflict within the journalistic field but there may be a tendency to prejudge negatively and delimit what is perceived to be alien to and ‘outside’ objectivity. Also, why is objectivity not capable of being an

economic value? I agree with Tester about the dangers of sensationalist reporting but I do not subscribe to a binary opposition that makes the scientific value of objectivity a high virtue and sensationalism a low, common, parlous virtue; in fact, not a virtue at all. This position broadly agrees with Zizek, Bauman and the Frankfurt School, whose work has uncovered truth in everyday popular discourses. Is there a more sophisticated approach to analysing sensationalism that challenges and enriches both sensationalism and objectivity at the same time? What sensationalism does not impute is sensory human individual phenomenological experience, a complex agency that constitutes a crack in the capitalist system, not existing necessarily outside it; an active space of becoming, not knowing, that may be as traumatic as it is compassionate. For some theoreticians, such as Michel Serres and some foreign correspondents, such as Chris Hedges, emotional dispositionality is a set of bodily, physical, affective experiences, not simply mental ones. This point is taken up in Chapter Six (6.2).

Tester might refute this argument by reasserting a political economic argument:

‘Instead of veering towards the middle ground between objectivity and human interest, practice will tend to fall back on a tried and tested formula which will secure audiences readily and quickly’. (2001: 36)

In the light of such an assertion, it will be instructive to test how formulaic is the journalism of those foreign correspondent practitioners, such as Fergal Keane, who depart from the ‘objective’ prescription. To what extent are such departures economically inscribed? Tester believes that there is likely to be more unfettered journalistic agency in non-commercial institutional contexts:

‘... there is no point of arbitration between these different goods (between, in this case, the goods of objective reporting and sensational human interest reporting). At best there can only be a mutual lack of understanding of the opposite position. But that degree of tolerance towards a different perspective upon what it is that constitutes good journalistic practice is likely to prevail only in those institutional contexts in

which there is little or no competition over access to scarce resources (that is, in those contexts where market concerns are not dominant)'. (2001: 35-6)

Tester (following MacIntyre) believes that when the ideal of objectivity clashes with the reality of capitalism, the result is 'emotivism':

'And that in turn means that the report ceases to be an end in itself (the objective telling of history or the communication of a certain human interest) and, instead, it becomes a means to an end of securing resources. In MacIntyre's terms this means that the virtues of the journalistic field collapse into a condition of what he calls *emotivism*'. (2001: 36)

I claim that Tester's interpretation of MacIntyre's theory is a concession to journalistic virtue because such emotivism involves sensationalism, journalistic preferences, not goods:

'For MacIntyre, emotivism can be defined as the practice of preferences rather than goods'. (MacIntyre, 1985: 11-14 in Tester, 2001: 36)

This underscores Tester's uncritical resistance to the possibility of the virtues of objectivity and sensationalism being enriched, recontextualized or agentively complicated, as in the example of Keane above. It also suggests that, for him, if objectivity is lost, journalistic agency slips into a more subjective mode, a 'preference', which is deemed as undesirable and problematic as loss of objectivity. There is a crack in objectivity that is not sensationalist; that is a more individual deployment of subjectivity. I do not feel satisfied with this either/or dichotomy of objectivity/sensationalism under the rubric of journalistic agency. I do not even approve of the negative connotation of the signifier and classifier, 'sensationalist'. This research asks if more complicated agencies are possible. For example, is compassion a more felt, embodied journalistic agency? Sensory journalism is taken up in Chapter Six, which also asks how so-called 'parachute journalism' affects

particularly the temporal aspect of compassionate agency? Does compassion derive from a more experiential, phenomenological journalistic agency that may include trauma?

Building on Tester's association of 'pure' (not sensationalist) journalism being associated with peer recognition and elite authority, interview question 15 asked each foreign correspondent whether he or she was regarded as a celebrity and whether this constituted a help or a hindrance in his/her practice. Most, if not all, the interviewees for this research do experience themselves as celebrities and this image projects to their viewers and rebounds. Chapter Six will look at the complex interface between compassion and recognition.

Compassion is a research issue that came out of the interviews, through several respondent voices. When I asked the correspondents questions around emotion and objectivity reporting conflict and trauma, compassion was often put forward as a response. Questions that I asked about identification and emotional attachment often led naturally to a discussion of compassionate agency. I presented to most of the interviewees the following interesting disquisition by Chris Cramer, published in *The Australian's* Media section, January 27th 2005 (see interview question 14):

'What has been different about much of the reporting, particularly on TV, has been that the emotional attachment between reporter and victim has been obvious. Gone is the professional, some might say artificial, detachment ... Now, for the first time, media professionals are starting to tell us how they feel about some stories. And it will probably make them better journalists'.

I asked them to comment and offer their opinions on this advocacy for emotion (interview questions 10 and 18); their responses are presented in Chapter Six. I also asked them about Robert Fisk's formulation of identification:

'A doctor who, I'm not comparing journalism with medicine, but a doctor who has to deal with someone who has been terribly wounded in a bomb

doesn't stand in the operation room weeping. He tries to save the person. When I see the most terribly wounded or murdered or amputated people, I want to get the story of what happened to them, the injustice, the shame, the outrage'. (Fisk, 2006: 1280)

In the context of a discussion about how the interviewee foreign correspondents constitute themselves in emotional practice, I also asked them about partiality (question 12), war journalism (question 11), gender (question 9) and celebrity (question 15).

It would be remiss to enter into a discussion about journalistic compassion without addressing the issue of compassion fatigue, which is commonly articulated in both journalistic discourse and media analytic literature. Janine di Giovanni argued in 1994 that many of her peers reporting the wars in former Yugoslavia, the Somalian civil war and Rwandan genocide felt little or no concern for sufferers or the dead. She saw journalists as the sociological victims of their vocation and proposed that compassion fatigue had emerged as a defence mechanism by journalists, followed by audiences (di Giovanni, 1994). In her view, the problem of compassion fatigue lies outside her sphere of journalistic influence.

For Tester, compassion fatigue is a direct result of the impossible demands placed on journalists to meet the mutually exclusive requirements of objectivity and human attachment. It constitutes a crisis for journalists as well as viewers, audiences and readerships. It is a symptom of a 'concern to manipulate access to resources' (2001: 37). So, again, he interprets the phenomenon as a political economic symptom, associated with sensationalist forces. The *OED* definition of compassion fatigue is:

'... apathy or indifference towards the suffering of others or to charitable causes acting on their behalf, typically attributed to numbingly frequent appeals for assistance, especially donations; (hence) a diminishing public response to frequent charitable appeals'.¹³

¹³ <http://oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/compassion-fatigue?q=compassion+fatigue>, accessed 25 June 2013.

Note the inclusion in the definition of the word 'indifference', a meaning that would not contradict Frosh's theoretical prescription for objective civil inattention. So, compassion fatigue may well be a weakness that results from civil inattention. At least, it may be a logistical fragmentation of the ideal goal of compassionate reporting.

Moeller (1999) has written a whole book on the issue of compassion fatigue. She makes four distinct important points. Her first point is:

'Compassion fatigue reinforces simplistic, formulaic coverage. If images of starving babies worked in the past to capture attention for a complex crisis of war, refugees and famine, then starving babies will headline the next difficult crisis'. (Moeller, 1999: 2)

Here she agrees with Tester that larger economically driven forces are stymying journalistic agency, rendering news content more formulaic, sensationalist and emotivist. This idea is supported by the BBC journalist, George Alagiah who, in 1998, raised the issue of 'template reporting', which 'implies that there is a formulaic way of reporting a humanitarian crisis' (Alagiah, 1998). Alagiah goes on to state that, in his view, the solution to compassion fatigue is within the sphere of journalistic agency: becoming more emotionally engaged with the human sufferers than the surrounding facts. In fact, Alagiah formulates two distinct modes of reporting, which he calls 'evocative' and 'diagnostic'. The former is the emotional engagement with human sufferers and the latter a more objective stance. For him, 'evocative' reporting carries ethical agency:

'... when I'm in the field, a part of me must be like a viewer. I must feel the same sense of shock, of shame, as they would and find a way to express those feelings ... there ought to be a bond between the reporter and the viewer'. (ibid.)

And clearly Alagiah's position is at odds with Di Giovanni's in that he does not believe that the cumulative experience of witnessing suffering and tragedy

necessarily leads to compassion fatigue. Or, at least, he maintains that there should be some journalistic scope to do something about it. I claim that different foreign correspondents have different boundaries of compassion (see 6.4 below).

Moeller's second point builds on the first and pays some lip-service to the use of immediacy mentioned above in 2.4:

'To forestall the I've-seen-it-before syndrome, journalists reject events that aren't more dramatic or more lethal than their predecessors. Or, through a choice of language and images, the newest event is represented as being more extreme or deadly or risky than a similar past situation'. (ibid.)

Moeller's third point refers directly to sensationalism as a primary motive for news story selection:

'Compassion fatigue tempts journalists to find ever more sensational tidbits in stories to retain the attention of their audience'. (ibid.)

Lastly, Moeller emphasizes the fact that journalistic perception of audience attention deficit limits the amount of time a journalist has to report stories in depth:

'It encourages the media to move on to other stories once the range of possibilities of coverage have been exhausted so that boredom doesn't set in'. (ibid.)

Boruah, a theorist who attempts to link emotional states to cognitive processes, states that what is put forward as something on which one can act or attempt to act appears as 'real' (1988). Boltanski borrows this idea, maintaining that fictional emotion can be defined as 'emotion without action' and implies that journalistic emotion is *literally* in between individual affect and social effect (Boltanski, 1999: 152). One of the main questions that his book, *Distant Suffering*,

addresses is 'What reality has misfortune?' (146-69). Boltanski is broadly an advocate of humanitarianism within and without foreign correspondence. He defends a politics of the present (immediacy):

'... to be concerned with the present is no small matter. For over the past, ever gone by, and over the future, still non-existent, the present has an overwhelming privilege: that of being real'. (1999: 192)

Tester, in *Compassion, Morality and the Media*, takes a similar position to both Boltanski and Boruah:

'... it can be proposed that compassion is identifiable as *morality* only as and when it is the basis of distinctive forms of social action on the part of the actors who together constitute the audience. All the time that compassion does not occasion action, logically it cannot be identified with morality. Instead, it is a personality trait'. (2001: 74)

Boltanski (1993: 152) states that emotion 'staged' by the media occupies an unstable position between real and fictional emotion. This suggests that for him the mediated representation of emotion already separates the journalist from the event, even before it reaches the viewers and listeners. For him, the event is real, but the television 'spectator' is cut off from the real event, separated, in such a way to make the event seem staged and fictional. Boruah and Tester focus on the means and ends of journalistic agency and whether or not use of emotion culminates in social action. For Boltanski, Boruah and Tester, the 'reality' of media emotion can only be retrieved if it translates into social action. Unless emotion in the form of compassion leads to identifiable action by the audience, it can remain only fictional emotion, either trapped in the personality of the journalist or lost in the ether of mediation. Boltanski's solution to fictional emotion is as follows:

'To prevent the unacceptable drift of emotions towards the fictional we must maintain an orientation towards action, a disposition to act, even if

this is only by speaking out in support of the unfortunate. But also there must not be too much doubt about the real existence of the unfortunates represented, or about the intentions or desires of the presenters and spectators'. (Boltanski, 1993: 153)

This distinction between 'moral' compassion and amoral individual journalistic emotion is problematic for several reasons: its binary structure and its inattention to different journalistic emotional agencies. In other words, it is a one-size-fits-all general prescription that does not allow any space for individual journalistic deployments of subjectivity.

The divergent, competing articulations of fourteen subjective foreign correspondent voices, outlined in the Conclusion, is of course the empirical evidence of the importance of an understanding of complex agency rather than a simple binary between objectivity and emotion, objectivity and sensationalism, objectivity and compassion. But audiences and journalists are not in the event; they are outside it and therefore, what they have in common is their capacity to 'witness' (a term investigated in 5.2) as well as be compassionate. What separates the two groups is the degree of physical and emotional proximity to conflict and trauma, the degree of 'mediation' or, better, immediacy.

I asked the respondent group two questions about emotion in their practice (interview questions 10, 11 and 14). I also asked them about whether they believed being a recognized public figure, a celebrity, affected their work (interview question 15).

2.7: Journalistic autobiography

The fifth and final important debate that is growing in academic and journalistic discourse is that of autobiography. The journalistic analytic literature focuses heavily on objectivity and autobiography. As an agency employed by five of the respondents here, it radically problematizes the notion of objectivity in foreign correspondence.

In the literature on autobiography, there are some interesting theorizations of the relationship between autobiography and objectivity (Lau, 2009), with particular focus on the limits of autobiography (Gilmore, 2001: 7). Lau (2009: 193) has conducted some important analysis of Michael Herr's autobiography, *Dispatches*. Lau claims that the autobiographical narrative running through *Dispatches* is repressed. This means that the narrative of *Dispatches* is more narcissistic in the sense of a disengaged, inward-looking fragmented self than reflexive in the sense of a self-identity constituted by the reflexive ordering of self-narratives or a self capable of seeing itself at a distance. In other words, despite its 'autobiographical' form, the book demonstrates a 'complex dynamic of self-representation' which 'reflects Herr's ambivalence toward his role in Vietnam and his preoccupation with the ethical responsibilities of the reporter'. Gilmore argues that sufferers of trauma often resist distinctly autobiographical modes of writing because they fear being judged by a legalistic framework that might expose ambiguity in their objective practice, thereby undermining their professionalism.

Autobiography is another form of journalistic practice of 'self-witnessing' or self-mediation, which stands out because it articulates an ambiguous or ambivalent navigation of fact and feeling. For this project, autobiography is a discourse informing the complexity of the respondents' agencies because it does not derive wholly from the interview questions. Therefore, it raises the possibility of setting one set of texts against another: interviews against self-reflexivity. What is interesting about autobiographical discourse is that it can be more informal, discursively fuller, with more experienced examples than news reports or comments and analysis pieces.

One difference between the interviewees' 'autobiographical' voices and their interview responses is, for want of a better way of putting it, me! I, as an academic playing the academic institutional 'rules of the game', constituted the interviewees' Other, I intervened, in order to elicit salient evidence for my 'objective' research project. This necessarily demanded that I operated as a complex agent. Most autobiographical discourse sets out to constitute a 'monologic' voice but ends up negotiating a dialogic one, or a dialectic, between the personal and the professional. As I will explain at greater length in Chapter Three: Methodology, I constitute myself as a complex Other to the foreign correspondent research group. I investigate whether foreign correspondent autobiographical texts

internalize or externalize the Other; or repeat one of the most recognized 'rules of the game' of institutional journalism, that of attempting to exorcize the self from the agency of being a rough drafter of history?

Foucault, Wittgenstein and Derrida, all looked at autobiographical issues such as the hermeneutics of the subject, therapeutic work on oneself, the philosophy of psychology and the ethical problems of self-constitution (Foucault, 2005; Hagberg, 2008; Smith, 1995). I take these as distinctive attempts to look at human agency as a complex phenomenon.

Foucault, as quoted in Chapter One, understood the self (the subject) as constituted by 'multiple forms of constraint'. In other words, the journalistic self is subject to the structured economic apparatus of media institutions. But how does the autobiographical voice talk to the professional, journalistic one? In autobiographical discourse, do internalized rules of agency persist or does something different emerge? However much one tries to map one's life narrative in writing, there is always a residual excess, a traumatic trace that resists becoming material on a written page, resists reification and objectification. The self is always subject to knowledge of the self, is secondary to powerful external discourses and institutional 'rules of the game' such as objectivity. In discursive terms, power enables all organizations, here media institutions, to constrain the agency of individuals through discursive 'rules of the game'. Foucault made the important hermeneutic point that, for the subject to have 'right of access to truth', s/he must be changed and become, to a certain extent, 'other than himself' (2001: 15). I will argue in Chapter Seven that the culmination of the interviewees' constitutions of their practices through institutional 'rules of the game', trauma, emotional attachments and life narratives is complex agency. An important element of complex agency is the prism of self-reflection, autobiography, that I have accessed through the respondents' answers to interview questions as well as autobiographical publications by five of the interviewees.

Echoing Foucault's point that the subject has to change and become Other to have access to truth, *The International Dictionary of Psychoanalysis* defines alienation as follows:

‘Inscribed in the opposition between the Same and the Other, alienation describes the condition of the subject who no longer recognizes himself, or rather can only recognize himself via the Other’. (43)

Building on this definition, I argue that, like trauma, the complex agency of foreign correspondent discourse, which I derive from the fourteen diverse life narratives, derives from institutional and self-mediated experiences that also recognize themselves via the Other. But the Other is constituted differently for several of the journalists, that is whom and what they regard as strange or familiar. Their constitutions of Otherness are external (institutional) and also internal (individual and moral). And autobiography is all about the internal and the internalization of the external, the Other. Where elite journalists stand out through autobiographical discourse is by partially recognizing themselves through their celebrity. So, celebrity here can be considered a form of alienation.

Autobiography, as well as ethics and the relationship between ethics and autobiographical writing, was a prominent theme throughout Derrida’s intellectual life. As an African-born academic, his experience of the Parisian academy was a complex one. Smith makes the case, *pace* Derrida, that autobiography ‘disturbs the very value of the human, that is, the relation of being to its end’. Here is how he articulates Derridean autobiography:

‘Instead of being in relation to the end – a fantasm of inclusion – the value of the human is re-estimated with a view to what is foreign to the end, writing – writing which suggests that the human is not within itself, such inclusion being given with the value of the end. The human must be reformulated according to the very thing which exceeds it, namely the autobiographical function of writing, which writes itself and whose structure takes the form of an inability to be reduced to an end’. (Smith, 1995: 191)

I make the conceptual connection of disturbance of ‘the very value of the human’ with not only the human experience of trauma, but also with the respondents’ complex relationships with trauma, their complex agencies. One is

also reminded of Meek's theoretical stance on two central agencies or mediations of trauma as constituting either unconsciousness or compassion. Meek prefers the former because he finds the discourse of compassion, emotional attachment and inclusivity to be falsely concealing a more threatening unconscious human agency, that of violence and exclusion. This tension is reflected in the tension between subjective and cultural trauma, one of the central research findings of this thesis, outlined at the end of Chapter Five. For me, there is something almost traumatic about the impossibility of marrying autobiography with truth, of closing the self as a historically fixed entity. For this very reason, great thinkers such as Freud and Bourdieu were resistant for the whole of their lives to producing a definitive, autobiographical text. They recognized the treachery of such an exercise and preferred to understand their psychoanalytic and sociological work as being truer representations of their mediated selves that would complexly outlive their bodies in historical terms. In other words, they constituted their agencies through the powerful 'external' agencies of science and society. This complex constitution of self vis-à-vis 'rules of the game' such as objectivity and history are mapped in Chapter Seven: Life narratives. In Lacanian terms (1979; 2001), truth (and the essentialism of facticity) as one of the main 'rules of the game' of Enlightenment truth regimes, the traumatic Real, can only be accessed through the symbolic and imaginary, in other words the fictional.

The theme of the respondents' life narratives is discretely explored in Chapter Seven through the autobiographical agencies of all the fourteen respondents, five of whom have published ostensibly autobiographical books, but autobiographical output is also cross-referenced with other autobiographical traces in the interview data as well as other voices that the respondents have deployed in the form of television programmes, documentary films, historical books and essays.

Wittgenstein wrote about the 'inner picture', first-person expressive speech, reflexive or self-directed thought and competing pictures of introspection, self-defining memory, and the therapeutic conception of philosophical progress as it applies to all of these issues:

'To see autobiography as philosophy is to see it as an ineliminable source of language-games of narrative self-description, and to see philosophy as

autobiography is to see it, in turn, as the distinctive kind of self-analysis – the intricate, layered disentangling of the mind’s grammatically fuelled impulses to misspeak, to mischaracterize itself – that Wittgenstein’s remarks on therapeutic philosophy articulate’. (Hagberg, 2008: 256)

This research is not directly concerned with the philosophy of language but we may understand in the above quotation the subjective turn as being a cultural transformation happening not only in British journalism but also in academic circles. What the above quotation brings out is Wittgenstein’s central contribution to autobiographical discourse. Like Foucault, he articulates the hermeneutic, therapeutic discourse of care of the self. Foucault articulates ‘care of the self’, *epimeleia heautou*, as a fundamental principle for describing the philosophical attitude throughout Greek, Hellenistic and Roman culture. For Foucault, Wittgenstein and Levinas (as argued in Chapter Six), the self must transform itself via the Other, via Eros, in order to be capable of some kind of truth. This might be the bridging of what Silverstone and Chouliaraki call the knowledge gap. Foucault (2005: 17) claims that the hermeneutic of the subject as cultural principle has been historically superseded by the Enlightenment ideal of scientific objectivity and its concomitant institutional ‘rules of the game’.

Such competing pictures of introspection are clearly evident in the responses to interview questions about respondents’ autobiographical work, as well as within the autobiographical works themselves. The inner picture is also usefully theorized by Giddens and Lasch, as outlined in Chapter Two above. There is an agential tension between self-reflexivity and narcissism. So, this research wants to operationalize British foreign correspondents’ autobiographical discourse to explore the nature of the interviewees’ complex agencies.

I also asked those interviewees who had not written autobiographies about the role of experience in reporting conflict and whether it had changed and developed over the years (interview questions 16 and 17).

2.8: Complex agency

Journalists operate within large media organizations that have their own institutional ‘rules of the game’. Twelve interviewees for this research work for six institutions (three television and three press): the BBC, Channel Four, CNN, *The Guardian*, *The Times* and *The Independent*. Two interviewees are freelance or independent.

Ethics, civil codes and moral decency demand that journalistic work on crisis involves some emotional responses. These give rise to issues for the journalists of how best to manage, suppress or make evident their responses. These responses, as demonstrations of how foreign correspondents constitute and witness trauma, are mobilized with the key theoretical literatures in Chapter Five.

Witnessing and ethics are rules or discourses of foreign correspondence that partially overlap with institutional rules, such as objectivity. Other discourses are more outside of the institutional game, and constitute political and moral internalized spaces; personal and subjective agencies. Such rules are also termed preferences, moral loyalties, ethical advocacies and emotional attachments. As stated above (2.3), this thesis builds on the theoretical perspective, derived from Bourdieu, whereby ‘the agent is never completely the subject of his practices’. This understanding opens the way for ‘feelings for the game’. Complex agency complicates Bourdieu’s duality of practice as ‘subjective truth’ and ‘objective reality’. It contextualizes fourteen subjective demonstrations of how elite British foreign correspondents constitute their subjective truths and objective realities, organizing them into the logical categories of institutional ‘rules of the game’ (Chapter Four), trauma, distance and witnessing (Chapter Five), emotional attachments (Chapter Six) and life narratives (Chapter Seven).

For some speculative realist theorists such as Latour, agency is complex because it contains human and non-human elements (Latour, 2005). In other words, objects have their own agencies. This is not how I employ the concept of complex agency because, as emphasized at the beginning of Chapter One, my approach to journalistic agency and discourse is concerned with how foreign correspondents internalize objects such as trauma from a human-centric perspective. As stated in the Introduction, the activity of journalists in covering traumatic events comes up against institutional rules of ‘objectivity’, reporting even

as their human senses and bodies are filled with competing emotional responses. This produces subjectively constituted, competing pictures of introspection. Competing examples of structure versus agency are what drive this entire thesis.

Objectivity is a word that in human minds tries to encapsulate the 'external', total truth as a human stance projected outwards but, behind objective practice stand human agents, in this case journalists. Wittgenstein was well aware of the gap between language and practice, as was Marx. Wittgenstein (2009: paras 143, 185) stated that we cannot say what a rule (for example, objectivity) means apart from its articulation by practical actors. This statement supports the theoretical approach of this thesis. As far as emotion (and its 'objective' articulation) is concerned, it is instructive to see and understand emotion as not being only self-contained and self-originated action but also as partially externally object-related. The interviews demonstrate how affective intersubjective two-way interchanges – dialectics, of not pure facts but facts, opinions, emotions and ethical considerations – and traumatic responses, are constituted by elite British foreign correspondents in their practice of reporting war, conflict and crisis.

This thesis favours a theoretical understanding that builds on Bourdieu's theory of duality of practice as both 'subjective truth' and 'objective reality' (Bourdieu, 1998: 95), broadly derived from Marx's argument that people do not simply mirror nature. Our perception, our 'practical, human sense activity' (Marx, 1964: 68) organizes experience. Hence Marx describes human senses as 'theoreticians in practice' (ibid: 160), which, I believe, excellently describes the role of emotion in journalistic agency. Another example of Marx's epigrammatic insight into human agency is:

'To be radical is to grasp the matter by the root. But for man the root is man himself'. (2000)

Damasio (2010) theorizes human cognition as a dynamic combination of self-as-object and self-as-knower, the latter representing an individual, potentially active, agency and the former, an objective, passive one:

‘The self-as-subject-and-knower is not only a very real presence but a turning point in biological evolution. We can imagine that the self-as-object-and-knower is stacked, so to speak, on top of the self-as-object, as a new layer of neural processes giving rise to yet another layer of processing. There is no dichotomy between self-as-object and self-as-knower; there is, rather, a continuity and progression. The self-as-knower is grounded on the self-as-object’. (ibid.: 9-10)

A contemporary approach to the limitation of objectivity is that of complex agency, traceable to three principal academic sources: Collingwood (1942), Inden (1995) and Hobart (1990). All three theorists broadly agree that agency is by no means to be translated into individualism, an undesirable, uncritical tendency attributable to the dominance of Anglo-Saxon, Western metaphysics and epistemology. The second entangled knot that they try to unravel is that of the conflation of agency with action. The key interview question (question 2) citing the example of a *Columbia Journalism Review* intern who conflates objectivity and impartiality with balance, illustrates this point well. The net effect of the intern’s action was indirectly and instrumentally the result of the editor’s agency and beyond, not only the agency of the intern. In fact, arguably, this example demonstrates that more agency is passive than active. Political journalists are seemingly more cautious about where the line between objectivity and politics can be. Political journalists often apply their agency to resist objectivity, which they understand as a deferment to institutional power. This thesis will employ a model of complex agency to look at where power may lie in reporting conflict, which enriches the locked-in dichotomy of ‘objective’ versus ‘political’ journalists. I believe they both have something important to offer but this will start to be understood only when the notion of agency is complicated. Agency is too often simply understood in terms of individual vs. social and active vs. passive.

This research will argue that autobiographical journalistic output is part of complex agency. The latest distinct evolutionary stage of development of self, according to Damasio, is the autobiographical self:

‘Finally there is the *autobiographical self*. This self is defined in terms of biographical knowledge pertaining to the past as the anticipated future. ... In addition, however, the core and autobiographical selves within our minds construct a knower; in other words, they endow our minds with another variety of subjectivity. For practical purposes, normal human consciousness corresponds to a mind process in which all of these self levels operate, offering to a limited number of mind contents a momentary link to a pulse of core self’. (2010: 23)

Damasio, as a neurological scientist, is offering a scientific picture of subjectivity that broadly falls into the camp of the self as if from the outside, laying down an objective discourse of closure on all subjective experiencing selves from the inside, so to speak. I do not intend to support an evolutionary explanation of journalistic agency. What Damasio’s model offers are three salient layers of human consciousness and experience, those of self-as-object, self-as-knower and self-as-autobiography. These three layers complexly interact with and contradict each other. If we map these on to the Giddens/Lasch models, it seems that self-as-object and self-as-knower, which crudely resemble self-reflexivity and narcissism, do not take into account the Other except as objectified experience, off which to reflect the self; and constitutions of self as autobiography seems to be split between narcissism and self-denial. These speculations will be tested in Chapters Six and Seven.

As stated in the Introduction, foreign correspondent discourse is constituted by multiple interpretations of inside-outside agency. Complex agency comprises competing models of structure and agency between objectivity-as-value and objectivity-as-practice, between trauma and compassion, between civil inattention and bodily testament, between detachment and attachment, between competing moral loyalties, between selves and truth.

Chapter Three: Methodology

No singular methodological approach would adequately address the complex set of concerns of journalistic agency and subjectivity in British foreign correspondent discourse, given the intended focus on how British foreign correspondents constitute their practice in terms of institutional 'rules of the game', trauma, emotional attachments and life narratives. The research, therefore, uses both qualitative semi-structured interviews and autobiographical texts. The methodology of this doctoral research is qualitative analysis of second-order journalistic discourse to ascertain how British foreign correspondents constitute their practice, not to analyse their practice.

As stated in the previous chapter, macro instrumental theoretical perspectives from political economy generally do not seem to have paid attention to media activism and political agency nor to local, micro, individual elements in the newsmaking process. This research attempts to escape, arguably, the two main flaws of macro approaches: generalization and the assumption that media practitioners are passive receivers of ideological power.

However, this research also recognizes the danger of positing a mutually exclusive relationship between 'micro' issues (individual journalistic agency) and 'macro' ones. It assumes that articulations of journalistic agency are dynamically related to larger institutional or political economic ones and vice versa. It also attempts to examine foreign correspondent agency as an unstable and conflictual process of human imagining (of self and Other) in space and time. Therefore, this research does not seek to destroy, deconstruct or invalidate previous worthy journalistic research but to enrich it through the dynamic, working, 'processist' theoretical frame of complex agency that emerges from the research data. Rescher (1996: 7-26) notes that processists include Heraclitus, Leibniz, Hegel, C. S. Pierce, William James, Henri Bergson, John Dewey, A. N. Whitehead, and W. H. Sheldon. Deleuze is also known to subscribe to the ontology of processism, albeit in his distinct way.

Processism is an understanding that the translation, the process, of theory to practice is an unstable, contingent one. Complex agency articulates individual,

human subjectivities as contingent processes of operationalizing institutional 'rules of the game', trauma, emotional attachments and life narratives.

3.1: Location and number of interviews

Journalistic practice was accessed principally by qualitative interview research, triangulated by other interview material available in the public sphere, biographical references gleaned through other interviews and autobiographies. Some of these biographical references were deployed in the interviews with all the other journalists, including the particular journalist. For example, Fergal Keane's 'heightened emotion', documented in the public sphere, was operationalized in all the interviews, as was John Simpson's 'blood on the lens' incident in Iraq (2003) and Robert Fisk's near death experience in Afghanistan (2001) as interview question 18. It was a deliberate strategy to elicit data on the complex political and personal relationships between subjectivities about issues of emotionality already in the public sphere. In the same fashion, a quotation by Robert Fisk using the analogy of medical practice as foreign correspondence was deployed as an interview question to all fourteen respondents as question 13.

The fourteen interviews, each lasting from one to two hours, between April 2006 and April 2008, were conducted in BBC offices, public cafés, *The Guardian* canteen and, in two cases (Anthony Loyd and Jeremy Bowen), in journalists' homes. Two interviews with the same journalist, Allan Little, took place in a BBC Bush House canteen and a bar in Somerset House, London. The second follow-up interview was particularly useful for a more probing investigation into the subject matter. Mark Easton and Fergal Keane were interviewed in BBC offices. John Simpson was interviewed in his agent's office. Jon Snow was interviewed at ITN. Maggie O'Kane was interviewed in *The Guardian* cafeteria. Mark Brayne was interviewed in the bar area at the Frontline Club. Linda Melvern was interviewed in a west London café. Five interviews were conducted by telephone, to Beirut (Robert Fisk), Sydney (John Pilger), Beijing (Lindsey Hilsum), and Baghdad (where Nic Robertson was embedded with the American army). With the possible exception of Robertson, all interviews took place in locations where those I talked

to felt comfortable. The interviews were semi-structured and open-ended. All interviews were audio digitally recorded, for which appropriate copyright clearances are being sought.

3.2: Snowball technique and institutional issues

The first interview was with Mark Easton, which ‘snowballed’ to Fergal Keane, Allan Little, Maggie O’Kane, Linda Melvern, Anthony Loyd, Robert Fisk, Jon Snow, Lindsey Hilsum, Nic Robertson, Jeremy Bowen, John Simpson, Mark Brayne and John Pilger. At the beginning of the ‘snowball’ process, the fact that Mark Easton knew and rubbed shoulders with Fergal Keane in the BBC was important. Then, the fact that Fergal Keane knew and was friends with Little, O’Kane and Loyd was instrumental in keeping the ball rolling until it reached a certain critical mass that the remaining journalists agreed to be interviewed when approached. The Keane/Little/O’Kane/Loyd group seemed to represent a friendship cluster as well as a professional peer group, seemingly, the result of their experience of working in Bosnia together as well as some journalistic stylistic commonalities, which I will discuss in Chapter Six. No journalist invited to contribute to the research declined the opportunity.

Are the contours of these groups reinforced by institutional identity and loyalty? There are six institutions represented (through employees) in the research data: the BBC, CNN, Channel Four, *The Guardian*, *The Independent* and *the Times*. There are two relatively independent journalists not affiliated with particular institutions or media companies (Pilger and Melvern). Within these six institutions, four are commercial, one has a public service remit and one a part commercial/part public service remit (Channel Four). There is one cultural difference in the research group; Nic Robertson is a British foreign correspondent working for CNN in America.

There are five press journalists, nine TV broadcast and one radio broadcast journalist. There are three women in the research interviewee cohort and eleven men. In terms of age of interviewees in 2013, they range from Loyd (47), Robertson (51), Keane (52), Bowen (53), Hilsum (55), Little (54), Easton (54), Brayne (63), Snow

(66), Fisk (67), Simpson (69) to Pilger (74). I have not been able to ascertain the ages of O’Kane and Melvern.

3.3: Outsider Issues

It is academic common sense not to pose research questions to non-academic respondents, journalists, in academic language. Doing so would likely only irritate and alienate them. At no point did I use the word agency in my interview questions. Even the word ‘trauma’ is a loaded word, so I began my questions on trauma by mentioning documented examples of their journalistic peers who had said that they had felt something personal had been demanded of them during certain traumatic events.

I approach my research as an academic, with no formal journalistic experience whatsoever. This places me as an ‘outsider’ to journalistic professional culture. But I am linguistically and culturally interpellated into British, Western culture where all the interviewees (except one) operate. I have been given privileged access to one-to-one discussions with fourteen British foreign correspondents, a fact that clearly reflects a will on the part of the elite British foreign correspondent community to engage others outside their field. My consciousness of being an ‘outsider’ to them, the journalists, was reinforced by how some of them approached me as a non-journalist. For example, I was taken to task by at least two journalists (O’Kane and Snow) for approaching objectivity and emotion as rather separate entities, a conception that presumably derives from a routine academic tendency to think abstractly rather than to do practically. In the case of Fisk, I was accused of projecting the issue of emotion into his work, since it is not something he usually thinks about. At a Frontline Club event in August 2010, ‘Insight with Jon Snow’, hosted by Vin Ray, I was teased by Snow for being a ‘flaccid’ journalist owing to my lack of journalistic credentials. This made me aware of the importance of journalists’ self-understanding of professional difference. In fact, the significance of journalistic ‘outsiderliness’ is discussed at length in Chapter Four. In the case of Nic Robertson, I asked him a loaded question about whether he agreed

that, in terms of emotion, there had been a 'sea change' in traditional reporting and received a rather abrupt response:

If you don't mind me saying so, Gareth, I'm trying to give you a considered response and you're trying to tell me a considered response. And, as a journalist, I wouldn't do that to somebody, unless I wanted them to end the interview.

This question was based on interview question 18. Admittedly, my loaded question had been clumsy. But the emotional tone of the reply was more robust than any of the other interviewees, on the telephone or otherwise. For Robertson, I was unqualified to employ journalistic techniques, outside the game, so not entitled to employ the rules. What may be most significant here is that Robertson was on standby, on duty, in a war zone, so he probably felt more under pressure and more aware of giving up his time than the others. This turn in the interview made me more sensitive to the fact that I needed to tread more carefully, be more supportive and less critical in order to avoid Robertson 'ending the interview'. Maybe this was a more real, less presentational representation of the use of journalistic emotion in a conflict zone.

Another interviewee, who was not in the journalistic field when I spoke to him on the telephone when he was in Australia, who gave me the impression that if my ideas became too leading or critical, this would truncate the amount of material I could gain, was John Pilger. John Pilger was also the only interviewee who requested that I e-mail him a copy of the interview transcript before he consented that I use it. When he had reviewed the transcribed interview, he asked for one or two minor alterations. This defensiveness and degree of caution may be necessary for Pilger because he is more independent, has a reputation as a somewhat maverick correspondent, for having radical, ideological views, and does not have the journalistic peer network that all the other interviewees have. In fact, Linda Melvern, as the only other independent journalist interviewee, was similarly truculent in terms of rejecting wholesale the importance of emotion in journalism in favour of objective truth, as well as being more leading in the interview than most of the other interviewees.

Over the history of Western academic research on non-Western culture, especially anthropological research, the distance between researcher and informant has been diminishing, leading to a debate about issues of familiarity with the field and objectivity (Weston, 1997). For the interviewees, their cultural outsider status is an issue that affects their agency vis-à-vis the non-Western others they are reporting on. For the methodology of this research, the distance is not a cultural but a professional one. I hope that my academic licence allows me to have objective distance on my journalistic informants, to facilitate my role as an 'impersonal analyst' (Srivinas, 1996: 157). The advantage of such an approach, as argued by foreign correspondents about their own work, is that, as a professional outsider, I can decipher implicit agentic patterns and try to avoid professional chauvinism, thanks to my academic curiosity. If anything, this research depends on a relatively clear distinction between 'inside' academia and 'outside' journalism. However, I take full responsibility for the fact that a blurring of shared Western cultural norms between researcher and informants, ethnocentricity, is inevitable to a certain extent.

The Oxbridge elite continues to dominate Britain's political and cultural establishment (Cadwalladr, 2008; Owen, 2008). My British foreign correspondent research group has one Oxbridge graduate. Most of the fourteen went to private or grammar schools for secondary education, one graduated from Cambridge University. As stated in the introduction, a study conducted in 2006 that concluded that most leading journalists went to private schools (Gibson, 2006). The only exceptions seem to be Jeremy Bowen who attended comprehensive Cardiff High School and Nic Robertson who candidly disclosed that he had failed English 'O' level. Most of the research group are also male, white and upper middle-class. Two are female but still white and middle-class. The majority of the research group is English; two are Irish and one is Scottish.

Ethics and morality are intertwined:

'Ethics concern the morality of human conduct. In relation to social research, it refers to the moral deliberation, choice and accountability on the part of researchers throughout the research process'. (Edwards and Mauthner, 2002: 16)

In the interest of ethical accountability, this research questions notions of objectivity and the epistemological integrity of searching for one universal truth. With qualitative interviewing there is the potential for multiple realities (King and Horrocks, 2010: 103). This research has demonstrated subjective realities. It has demonstrated multiple subjective realities within institutional foreign correspondence and across institutional and independent foreign correspondence. These realities lead to both synergies and tensions. I handled these subjectivities by being a complex agent myself. I had to embrace academic 'rules of the game', such as impartiality and objectivity. But, as a human being, I experienced emotional attachments to certain journalists, based on my own moral loyalties and life influences. I fully recognize the efficacy of standing back, just as I do now during the writing process. But life experience, like writing, is a process and series of drafts and redrafts.

This research takes a critical stance towards research that regards itself as detached, authoritative and objective (Gergen and Gergen, 1991). According to Mair (1989), detached, depersonalized research is arguably a powerful and well-rehearsed 'illusion'. Qualitative research is carried out from a particular standpoint (Banister et al., 1994). This means that subjectivity is not understood as a methodological or ethical problem, but a resource that can be developed to augment and intensify social research. Payne (2007) argues that reflexivity allows the researcher to acknowledge his role in production of his analysis. I did this by recognizing that, as the analysis of the data developed, it was turning upside down some of the political assumptions and emotional attachments that I had possessed at the beginning of the research process. The very process of carrying out the research had to remain as open as possible to contingencies, to learning and deepening experience. I found my political stance had become more complex and ambiguous, which I now regard as a good thing. This is something I hope the foreign correspondent reader may obtain from reading this thesis, reflexivity, a new light and angle on fellow practitioners (see Conclusion). Reflexivity can be employed to monitor, audit and make the research process accountable, supporting validity:

'Transactions and ideas that emerge from [the research process] ... should be documented. The construction of analytic or methodological memoranda and working papers, and the consequent explication of

working hypotheses, are of vital importance. It is important that the process of exploration ... be documented and retrievable'. (Coffey and Atkinson, 1996: 191)

This research conforms to SOAS Research Ethics Policy.¹⁴ This is not strictly a sociological study but, as an interdisciplinary study, it does contain sociological elements. The thesis conforms to the British Sociological Association's Statement of Ethical Practice for the British Sociological Association.¹⁵ I have striven to maintain the professional integrity of sociological inquiry.

I have exercised my responsibility to 'safeguard the proper interests of those involved in or affected by their work' (ibid.). I believe I have reported my findings accurately and truthfully. The process of setting up each interview by e-mail necessarily entailed seeking and gaining the respondents' written electronic consents for the interviews. These copies have been retained. So, the interviewees certainly freely offered informed consent. I do not regard this obtaining of consent as a once-and-for-all prior event, but as a process, subject to renegotiation over time. It was also made clear in the e-mails that the research was being conducted strictly for non-commercial, academic purposes, with the freedom to research and study, solely for academic dissemination. I duly exercised my responsibility to explain to the interviewees in appropriate detail, in language meaningful to the participants, what the research was about and that it was being undertaken under the auspices of the Centre for Media and Film Studies, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London.

I am satisfied that the research undertaken is worthwhile and its methods are appropriate. I had no personal or political attachments to the interviewees, which supported a good degree of methodological detachment. That said, I recognize that, subsequent to the interviews, I now have personal and moral relationships with the respondents. I am fully aware that I 'have some responsibility for the use for which the data may be put' (ibid.).

¹⁴ <http://www.soas.ac.uk/researchoffice/ethics/file50158.pdf>.

¹⁵ <http://www.britisoc.co.uk/media/27107/StatementofEthicalPractice.pdf>

I have exercised my responsibility 'to ensure that the physical, social and psychological well-being of research participants is not adversely affected by the research'. (ibid.) (see Chapter Five).

One interviewee, John Pilger, requested that he read a copy of the interview transcript before I used it. In two cases (Little and Fisk), interviewees asked me to temporarily suspend the recording in order to convey messages that they evidently considered inappropriate for any kind of publication.

Given that this research has a focus on elite foreign correspondents, who are already in 'the public eye', the undertaking of anonymity was undesirable. In other words, the names of the interviewees are essential for the pursuit of the research in question. Once the nature and purposes of the research had been conveyed, no respondent requested anonymity.

The fact that all of the respondents were elite foreign correspondents raised several possibilities and problems. The possibilities were that these individuals represented some of the most powerful voices in British foreign correspondence, whose work is celebrated in public forums and whose power extends from being the finest British practitioners working today to also being, in some ways, equivalent to public intellectuals and publically trusted purveyors of, and opinion-makers about, international events.

An important aspect of the research design and methodology is the non-anonymity of the respondents. As elite foreign correspondents, the names of these journalists exist in the minds of their viewers and audiences, in the public's imagination. Without providing statistical information, many British people have heard of John Simpson, John Pilger and Robert Fisk. In fact, they are also recognized voices outside of the UK. This, I argue, is part of their complex agencies. Their power to shape and influence their audience's interpretations of distant suffering, conflicts, crises and wars is strong. In Fergal Keane's case, this has made him a figure singled out in the British journalistic 'habitus' for 'heightened emotion', to which the responses in the research group are mixed. Robert Fisk's journalistic style has even given rise to a verb, to 'Fisk', which, similarly, is used pejoratively as well as positively.

It is recognized that, given their mostly public personalities working within public organizations, the interviewees' disclosures make them vulnerable to public

scrutiny and criticism. However, once the interviews were underway, I had the impression in all cases that the respondents' established public identities meant that they were very competent in gauging what and how much they should disclose. In other words, their representative voices and their familiarity with interviews and voicing their positions publicly was a mitigating factor against vulnerability. They know the 'rules of the game'.

Given that my research questions involved probing sensitive and personal issues concerning trauma and mental health, I recognize that this increased the personal risk to these public personalities. This is partially offset by two important factors: the democratic political context in which the practitioner's function is less likely to threaten an individual journalist, than an authoritarian context. Also, I believe the sensitive, emotional nature of the research material justifies conducting these interviews since my research questions are academically significant. for the very success of the research project.

I believe that the research group still supports the spirit and validity of this thesis. I have sent all of them excerpts of the thesis, to which several have responded. In the spirit of maintaining a bridge between academic and journalistic work, where possible, I hope to continue my relationships with the interviewees for post-doctoral research. In fact, I regularly invite some of the interviewees to be guest speakers in my teaching classes at SOAS. So far, three of them have accepted the invitations. I believe this is testament to their ongoing support for my research.

Chapter Four: Institutional ‘Rules of the Game’

To recapitulate, the theoretical framework set out the following as the most important institutional ‘rules of the game’: objectivity, impartiality or neutrality, centring, audiences, visual impact, proper distance for mediating human suffering and audiences, use of time and censorship (of self) in the interest of maintaining the rules of institutional foreign correspondence. These will be operationalized against semi-structured interview data below. An important part of my theoretical framework is the question of objectivity as an institutional rule of the game. Chapter Two outlined some critical major nodes of reference in the media analytic literature on objectivity: Bagdikian, Herman and Chomsky, and Fiske (political economy); Zelizer (culture); Cunningham (social constructionism); Hoskins (time and history) and Van Zoonen (gender). It also laid out similar discussions of objectivity in more popular academic and journalistic discourse (Gray, Damasio, Mindich, Dionne, Didion, Keller).

Kieran states:

This is, indeed, why impartiality is important. For the journalist must aim to be impartial in his considered judgements as to the appropriate assessment of particular events, agents’ intentions, why they came about and their actual or potential significance. A failure of impartiality in journalism is a failure to respect one of the methods required in order to fulfil the goal of journalism: getting at the truth of the matter’. (1998: 34)

This is a theoretical elision of impartiality with truth, a rule of institutional foreign correspondence that will be evident below. But, as theoretically framed by Foucault (Chapter One), some foreign correspondents constitute truth as partiality rather than impartiality.

4.1: Objectivity

Schudson (1978: 157) argues that ‘the belief in objectivity is a faith in “facts”, a distrust in “values”, and a commitment to their segregation’. That is why subjectivity, opinion, bias and values are deemed prejudicial and partial, antithetical to the goals of objective agency, according to some of the constitutions of foreign correspondence below.

Schudson (1978: *ibid.*) posits the idea that, historically, objectivity emerged in journalism at the same time that subjectivity was being accepted as a problem in producing objective news. The ideal of objectivity emerged ‘precisely when the impossibility of overcoming subjectivity in presenting the news was widely accepted and ... precisely because subjectivity had come to be regarded as inevitable’. Tuchman (1972) theorizes the ‘rituals of objectivity’ as routine practices without coherent epistemology. He argues this means ‘fact’ depends on common sense, which is defined by the cultural community, the public, not by epistemology. In other words, journalism is a set of conventions and practices, more democratic than elitist, not a philosophical construct. Although the ideal of objectivity appeared in particular media contexts, specifically as corporate norms at institutions such as Reuters and the BBC, throughout the twentieth century it was never accepted as an ideal among mainstream British journalists. Particularly among print journalists, such ideals as independence, fair play, and non-intervention by the state were seen as more powerful than objectivity (Hampton, 2008: 477-493). I wished to explore if there are indications in the British foreign correspondent elite habitus of a strategy that overrides a more scientific approach to objectivity, of unifying the largest public possible by distancing ‘their’ conflicts from ‘our’ audiences (Muhlmann, 2008: 13). Are ‘rituals of objectivity’ breaking down and becoming ‘rituals of emotionality’, a new rule of the game, which is defined sometimes partly by the public, sometimes partly by the individual journalist, sometimes partly by technology, sometimes overdetermined by violence?

Although the media theoretical research on the links between objectivity and political economy are well documented (Herman and Chomsky, 1994; Fiske, 1987; Barthes, 1993), I do not feel satisfied that this causal relationship is an exhaustive or a historical one. Rather it is a partial one because it omits the intersubjective role of emotion and human agency. Ideals of rationality, science and objectivity clearly have a role to play in foreign correspondent journalism. My research concern is that news production work on objectivity does not attend to

the emotional and cultural disposition of the human reporter, a lack that may be manifest in the interviewee group's constitutions of partiality and agency. I am interested in culture in so far as I am looking for cultural synergies in the respondents' articulations as well as subjectivities and differences between them. If I concede that emotion is a fundamental part of human behaviour, professional and personal, the interesting question is how do journalists cope with it when covering traumatic stories. I was interested in the conventions, the 'rules of the game' through which journalists handle their own responses to crisis stories. I do this by asking a group of prominent British press and television foreign correspondents how they formulate and practice both their use of emotion and their objectivity. And their responses are presented here.

This chapter starts to deconstruct the discourse of objectivity, as articulated by the fourteen interviewees. I was keen to explore foreign correspondents' understandings and conceptions of objectivity. One of the central findings from the interview research data was the consistency with which interviewees talked about objectivity, as well as the issues of unconscious emotion, their affirmative responses to their images of being outsiders and universal history, three concepts which arguably attempt to subsume individual agency into the practice of objectivity. It was suggested by most interviewees that conscious emotion should be regarded as a constraint on objectivity because it places the storytelling journalist inside the journalistic narrative, blurring his/her 'twenty-twenty' vision and preventing a 'feel for the game'. For all of them, conscious emotion leads to a use of emotion associated with subjectivity, opinion, bias, manipulation and even falsity, all five of which apparently diminish or even destroy the power of objectivity.

Linda Melvern, an investigative journalist for the last thirty years, flatly dismissed the importance of emotion in her work:

I'm not going to have this debate with you. You really need to read my work.

For Melvern, the removal of emotion is a necessary rule of the game in order to produce objectivity. The story, objectivity, facts and accuracy, together *are* journalism and there is no call for questioning this. The separation between messenger and message, truthful messenger and truthful message is self-evident. Melvern is profoundly committed to her work on Rwanda:

You talk to me after twelve years on Rwanda. Every bloody major aspect of that story I broke. You talk to me after that.

I asked her if she thought it was important to look at what drives foreign correspondents and she replied:

I don't give a stuff. Why do we matter?

I asked her again about her motivation. She said:

Anger. Insatiable curiosity.

Jeremy Bowen prefers impartiality to objectivity and sees it as a useful way of keeping one's emotions and personal opinions away from the audience:

But I don't think the audience are very much interested in what I think and how my emotional scale is going that day, whether I'm up or whether I'm down.

Here Bowen is constituting his practice as conforming to the 'centring' rule of the game. Robertson also practises 'centrism'. Unlike Bowen, he is positive about showing a degree of emotion to his audience:

There is a degree of interest in what the reporter's feeling and thinking besides the straight tell of the story. I don't think either is mutually exclusive but I do think that we see that and we respond to that.

He even says that emotion is good for targeting a young audience:

... but we're appealing, perhaps, to a generation which needs to be drawn more into the news.

The above statement is the strongest endorsement of any of the interviewees about the use of emotion in reporting international conflict. Like BBC objective journalists, Robertson is mindful of the perceived needs of the CNN viewers, more mindful, in fact, he claims:

My opinion is that we are more aware of what stories the audience is interested in.

Robertson also maintains that CNN news is more objective than other Middle Eastern as well as British news organizations:

Are we less objective than many of the Middle East broadcasters? I would argue that, no, we're a lot more objective. That would be my perception ... I think English journalists are often less objective than American journalists, in all honesty. They take an editorial stance far more readily than American journalists.

As far as Robertson is concerned, (political) opining is more of a departure from objectivity than (individual) emoting. It is possible to attribute this to a difference between British and American news culture. Robertson has no problem with the contradiction between emoting to engage audiences, to compete with other news outlets, and objectivity:

There is a way to connect with the audience and have them understand what it's actually like to be there. We are a window. We are a window on information. We're a window for people to see in. I would argue, these days, because of the competitive nature of the broadcast medium, of the information medium, that it's harder to connect with people. And that connects with them and makes them pay attention in a way that ten years

ago they would have paid attention. They didn't have a myriad of other places to go and get this information.

Robertson also makes clear that he means emotionally connecting with an American national audience:

Anyone that thinks that all news isn't local is going to rapidly go out of business, aren't they?

Jon Snow takes the view that objectivity is contingent on facts, and emotionality on the facts of human suffering in the story:

I can tell the direction you're going in. And the thing seems to me that your whole ethos is built around compartmentalizing emotion and dispassionate talking and the rest of it as if in some way the journalist decides what compromises to make – you know, whether to be a little bit emotional, or not very emotional, or not emotional at all, or entirely dispassionate, and I think anybody who gets into that game is going to be a very bad, and a very tedious reporter. The best thing to do is to recount the facts as you know them, and be honest about the emotional impact of the thing, and get on and tell the story as effectively as you can.

What he seems to be setting out here are two principal dangers of the use of emotion: artificiality or dishonesty and incoherence. On the other hand, emotion engages viewers, draws them in. So, as long as an account is truthful and coherent, some emotional agency is recommended. When reporting suffering, Snow suggests that there should be slightly more emotional agency. He suggests that reporting suffering demands a certain emotional agency without which there would be accusations of lack of empathy, maybe indicating political bias, or viewers would not be satisfactorily emotionally engaged:

Well, I don't think that an account of human suffering that excludes an emotional response is a holistic take on what has happened. Otherwise, I think you would have all sorts of military spats and the rest of it, as she [Diana Johnstone] describes and people would say, 'So what?'

When I pressed him about a recent example of his use of emotion during an interview with an Israeli diplomat about the 2006 war in Lebanon in which he was accused of bias, Snow provided the following response:

I think I was only dealing with facts. The facts were that Katushka rockets have caused remarkably little loss of life and remarkably little damage over a long period of time. And even subsequent to that interview, even in a condensed period of war during which enormous [...] ¹⁶ was made with two and a half thousand Katushka rockets hitting Israel – terribly little damage, and very little loss of life. I mean, one Katushka rocket managed to kill eight people. I went to that particular house in Haifa and I looked through the hole in the roof and it was very bad luck. Here were these guys gathered under this one hole the size of that light. The rocket had come straight through and just hit the ground where they were standing and they were all killed. Now you could say, 'Well it kills lots and lots of people', but objectively it was very bad luck. It then took nearly a week before anyone else was killed, and, in the meantime, three or four hundred rockets were fired. And I don't think this was an emotional judgment.

Here he seems to be appealing to a notion of objective common sense, as theorized by Tuchman. He does not believe that the casualties inflicted on the Israeli population equate to the levels of suffering of the Lebanese because of the relatively much greater statistical evidence of Lebanese casualties. His disengaged role leads to a relative judgement of one side's suffering, the Lebanese side, meriting more time and emotional agency. He denies his own emotional agency or at least channels it into maintaining his 'objective', fact-based position. The key point seemed to be the use of the word *pathetic*, which steps beyond factual

¹⁶ Unfortunately, this word remains inaudible on the digital recording.

reporting towards judgement and leads to accusation of bias. Snow concedes that he was exaggerating to a certain extent and using language loosely but still maintains that his approach was objective:

I would say it is an example of loose use of language. But essentially, objectively, I think I was right. By any objective account, Hezbollah's whole rocket assault on Israel: pretty pathetic!

Allan Little provided a kind of default position on emotional agency when I asked him if there was a place for emotional agency in reporting wars:

Only if it's well done because, as we've already established in this conversation, some people try to do it and it falls flat. It goes over the top or it sounds phony and then it's counter-productive. It has the opposite effect to the one it's intended to convey. If you're going to use emotion, which I think you should, to convey the emotional impact on the ground, because you want it to be sensory, you've got to be attuned. You've got to be emotionally responsible yourself, and understand the emotional response from the people who are listening or watching you. You can't switch it on like an actor. It's got to be real. And the way to make it real is to pull yourself right back from it.

This statement clearly demonstrates reflexivity as a rule of the game, guarding against lapsing into narcissism. Little refers here to the danger of false 'phony' emotion, which is likely to intrude if you assert your own false reaction instead of convey people's true emotion. This model assumes that personal, subjective emotion is problematic, but reading others' emotion is not so. He maintains, like Snow, that external factors override internal ones. He also sensorily attunes himself to what he believes is the emotional 'real' tone that his viewers expect. The theme of sensory journalism is also explored in Chapters Five and Six.

Little offered one outstanding example he has experienced which demonstrates that bias can arise as a result of political factors that influence his

imagined BBC viewership. In any case, he clearly believes that these external factors compromised his emotional agency and objectivity. He gave the historical example of the BBC reporting of the IRA bombings in the UK in the 1970s and 1980s:

We really weren't objective because there was such an extreme public mood at the time. Extreme, I mean, remember the hunger strikes. The public discourse that was conducted in this country was conducted in such a way that people were able to say, if you support the five demands of the IRA, that's the same thing as supporting their right to blow up a pub in Birmingham. And they've got such a mass of public opinion on their side in that assertion. The public mood became poisoned.

Little's mention of public discourse is interesting because it suggests that the BBC had no choice but to reflect what it considered to be the feelings of the British public, despite his own personal misgivings. This conforms with the sensory emotional tuning he alludes to above. He perceives a popular democratic feeling of an imagined British public. This is a 'centring' rule of the game. I asked him if this inability to adhere to the BBC objective model was an example of the public mood orchestrating the journalist's use of emotion and objectivity:

Yes. Yes, the public mood is a fickle thing and to pretend that we can operate without being affected by the public mood is daft really because clearly we can't.

This is a telling admission that, under certain circumstances, the fickle public mood is able to override the objective model. It begs the question, what are these circumstances and how is the public mood 'known'? The practice of objectivity necessitates a distance between agency and the story. In this case, the line between agency and story is arguably blurred because the subject material, the story, is too close to the journalistic agent. I then asked Little if the BBC reporting of the IRA bombings had not been objective because of violence or because of political partisanship:

Partly the violence, I am sure. And that everybody suddenly felt themselves vulnerable to being murdered by terrorists. But the mood, the justified mood of public outrage that happens after a series of bombs in pubs or killings of people, meant that supporting the five demands, or saying that in some way the five demands were in some way legitimate became politically impossible. So, everybody had to prove how anti-violence they were by condemning the IRA and, therefore, condemning everything that they asked for.

Given that he was assigned as a reporter for the event, I asked Keane about his experience of reporting the 7th July London bombing in 2005. I asked him, according to my impression of looking at the British, including the BBC, and American TV news footage, whether he felt the British institutional tendency was to emotionally downplay the atrocity. I put it to him that the way he responded to it emotionally was a different kind of emotional register to Mark Easton and all the other British journalists, in general:

I think what I felt was I reported it as I would a foreign story. A lot of people said, oh, the spirit of the Blitz, etcetera. That is not what I encountered on the streets. I encountered people who were afraid, who were deeply shocked. And, yes, there were people saying we must carry on. Of course people said that. But what I detected, even at a very early stage, is a sense of shock. But that's not a bit surprising. I didn't feel the kind of great spirit of defiance. People weren't running around like headless chickens but they were deeply shocked and traumatized by this.

Keane's statement here throws very important light on his framing of conflict and trauma, based on his experience as a foreign correspondent. Whereas, in the case of BBC reporting of the IRA bombings in the UK in the 1980s, the objective rule of the game were suspended in favour of national political expediency. In the case of reporting home-grown terrorism in 2005, Keane placed himself outside the 'rules of the game' of objectivity by applying his foreign correspondent 'rules of the game'.

Little makes a pertinent observation about the difference between classic public service BBC objectivity and Channel Four's 'looser' interpretation of public service values and how they affect the two institutions' uses of emotion. He claims that Channel Four has more manoeuvring space to go against mainstream currents of opinion. Snow's 'loose' use of language describing the 2006 Israeli attack on Lebanon seems to be a case in point:

I mean, I think Jon [Snow] gets away with stuff on Channel Four News that would not be tolerated at the BBC. And that's not about being emotional, that's about being partisan. I don't think that's emotional. The thing is that he feels very emotionally committed to certain causes. I've no doubt about that. I've seen him in public, on the platform, and I admire it. But mostly, though, I admire it because I tend to agree with it. I tend to find myself broadly on the same side of the argument. Not always, but broadly speaking. It's fine, its Channel Four. They have a different set of values, a different remit. Strictly speaking, they are supposed to adhere to the same public values, standards that we do, but they don't. They get away with a much more, a much looser, more interpretative, more partisan, and, indeed, sometimes campaigning and advocacy kind of journalism.

Little draws a line and distinguishes between being partisan and being emotional. This agrees with Robertson's assertion above. The implication seems to be that emotion and politics are two separate human agencies. So, if you are 'emotional', you are the source of the emotion whereas if you are 'partisan', you are not the source but a political conduit. In Little and Robertson's views, the personal is not political.

Bowen takes a similar view to Little but, for him, partiality is more of a danger than not being objective:

We see an event. I say, these are the reasons why it is happening. And then I come to some kind of conclusion about where it's going. I think that's ok and you can retain impartiality doing that sort of thing.

Now compare Little and Bowen's perspective with John Pilger's view:

I find reports, and you hear these a lot on the BBC, which can cover itself with nonsense that it has risen to a nirvana of objectivity and, therefore, can operate from that sort of celestial place, of emotional reporting that highlights tragedy that doesn't even begin to suggest why this tragedy has happened because, if they suggest that, then it may raise very embarrassing and unpalatable questions about power. So, often emotion is used to mask that and I'm very much opposed to that. I think those who talk about black and white really like to deny. They do believe they have been touched by a higher authority in some ways, that has stripped away all this human complexity and has allowed them to see events objectively, impartially, without the slightest hint of bias or anything from their background entering into their thinking. That's absolute nonsense, of course.

Little sees emotion as a personal problem for journalists that can impinge on objectivity whereas Pilger construes emotion as having two somewhat paradoxical forms. Pilger believes that 'objective' reporting, such as the BBC's, that uses emotion to highlight suffering and tragedy, is 'false' because it tries to engage viewers with events in order to avoid politicizing itself and the events themselves. So, any emotion used in the name of objectivity is deemed to be falsely attaching itself to suffering people in the story in such a way that the BBC's real emotional attachment is with its own political appeasement of the powerful British state. This would seem to concur with Little's view on the BBC's reporting of the IRA campaigns, but Little regards this example as a bad exception rather than the good rule.

Pilger's criticism of BBC objectivity comes close to Hallin's theoretical position when talking about mainstream reporting of the Vietnam War. Hallin (1989: 25) writes that:

'The effect of "objectivity" was not to free the news of political influence, but to open wide the channels through which official influence flowed'.

Robert Fisk suggested that, in terms of use of emotion, his newspaper, *The Independent*, has no such objective constraints, which leads to clearer editorial moral lines of judgement, a position that seems to be in line with Pilger's. Fisk said:

If you're reporting the slave trade in the eighteenth century, you interview the slaves. You don't give equal time to the slave ship captain. If you're reporting the liberation of a Nazi extermination camp in the Second World War, you talk to the victims, and the snipers you don't give equal time to. When, in August 2001 I was very close to the suicide bombing of a pizzeria in Israeli West Jerusalem. I saw an Israeli woman with a table leg sticking through her, a child without eyes, I didn't give equal time to the Islamic Jihad spokesman. When I was at Sabra and Shatila Camps massacre, between the 16th and 18th September 1982, which was carried out by Israel's Lebanese militia allies, I didn't give equal time to the Israeli army spokesman. You know we have to be moral people. We are moral people, I think.

It is noteworthy that Fisk's emotional agency is measured in time apportioned to 'victims'. For Fisk, reporting conflict has to have moral agency. Like Pilger, his emotional agency is viable only as a moral one that aligns itself politically with victims, losers and sufferers in a war or conflict. This argument is easier to make when war victims are civilians rather than soldiers. That said, Fisk does underscore his prescription with the fact that moral agency is by no means to be equated with emotional agency (see below), rather with truth. This distinction is further investigated in Chapter Six.

Anthony Loyd expresses the view that *The Times* newspaper orients its use of emotion in order to engage readers, the reading public; again, a kind of commonsensical position (Tuchman, 1972) and the 'centring' rule of the game. For him, this is the purpose of emotional agency:

What's objective, a rock? I'm not a rock and I'm not objective. I'm full of electro-impulses, flesh, blood, chemicals and probably prejudice as well. And if one castrates one's ability to engage with emotions too much, then one gets into the awful staid form of journalism that you just sort of churn out one side's facts and claims, and the other's, and the reader doesn't become any more engaged, no, any more enlightened at all. A lot of the stuff coming out from the wires now from Iraq, you know, 'Iraqis say Americans bombed the house and killed sixteen women and children. The Americans say they bombed the house and it contained insurgents'. You can't get that. You just write that down. What is the reader supposed to make of that?

Here, like Little, Bowen and Snow, Loyd acknowledges his emotional agency as a means of connecting with his newspaper's readership. This rule of the game does not address conflict of interest between readers as consumers and sufferers of conflict being 'consumed' as spectacle.

What emerges from these BBC, Channel Four and two newspaper orientations are differences in associations between objectivity, emotion and opinion, political bias, partisanship or what is sometimes called advocacy journalism. On the one hand, BBC journalists seem to be more concerned about emotional content that leads to accusations of partiality, a sense that there is a political agency implicit in emotional content, support for a particular cause. In other words, most of the BBC correspondents' use of emotion tends to put a greater distance between agency and journalistic subjects, between agency and reported events; to the extent that individual agency has to be squeezed as much as possible out of the news story. This is not so with Fergal Keane, whose particularity will be described below. On the other hand, Robert Fisk and John Pilger regard the BBC's *deus ex machina* objectivity as a systematic cover for protecting a powerful state interest, that is to say the British government. Therefore, they believe that there is no unbiased objective position, and that it may be immoral to pretend that there is because that leads to uncritical neutral moral stances indistinguishable from powerful state or corporate viewpoints. In other words, not taking a political position, whether one likes it or not, is passively taking a position. This is complex agency. Little and Bowen's deployments of emotion seem to come

closest to Schudson's definition of objectivity (1990: 121). According to Schudson, the aim of the professionalization of journalism and law is:

'to pin down objectivity, to establish reliable tests and rules and standards of knowledge. In both professions there have been attempts to locate an Archimedean point from which pronouncements about the world would be trustworthy'.

Loyd and Snow are somewhere between these two poles (Pilger/Fisk and Little/Bowen), understanding the purpose of their emotional agency as being to engage viewers rather than to make moral judgements.

Simpson uses a legal analogy to describe his use of emotion:

All I think is that people who work for an outfit, for instance, like mine, which aims to be objective, not to take sides, to be like a prosecutor in a court case, to say to a jury, these, as best as we can get them, are the facts, it's up to you, that's what we should try to do. I think sometimes people get carried away a little bit by what they see and the feelings that they have. Actually, in my experience, you don't really need to load the dice very much. People will see from the first five seconds of your report who's wrong and who's right and you don't need to point out, you can just open it up to them.

Simpson freely associates the judiciary with truthfulness and objectivity, rather than law being a matter of subjective interpretation of written cultural and historical edicts. For him, institutional power is so aligned with state power, the law, that its agency is interchangeable. Hilsum is similarly wary of the idea of constituting emotion in her practice:

I worry about this phrase, 'using emotion'. You should never use emotion because, if you're using emotion, that suggests that emotion isn't real. That suggests that you are manipulating something, which is a very bad thing to

do. If you allow yourself to become too emotionally involved in something, then you are in danger of being manipulated and being subject to propaganda; and you have to pull yourself back. And so that is probably the greatest danger of becoming emotionally involved and that is why one has to be very wary of it.

For Hilsum, emotion is instinctually already there, a rule of the game. And pulling yourself back is necessary to avoid partiality, another rule of the game. Given that objectivity is one of the central pillars of mainstream international journalism, a yardstick of professionalism, this raises important issues with regard to gender. Compare Hilsum and Brayne's respective views on gender and emotion in foreign correspondence. I asked Hilsum if she thought gender had a role to play in journalism. This was her reply:

No, I don't think so. I don't basically think that there is any difference. I think the female reporters have to be very careful, be extremely professional because I think that if male reporters betray emotion in their reporting then they're regarded as being very sensitive and, if female reporters betray emotion, then they are regarded negatively. So, I think it's extremely important for female reporters to be very professional and very straight and not to overdo the emotion, to be extremely careful and professional about that.

Hilsum's statement is somewhat contradictory. Despite her initial claim otherwise, journalistic practice is highly gendered simply because women journalists have to be less emotional in their practice than men. Here is Brayne's view on Hilsum:

Lindsey has a very strong developed macho side.

Here is how he views Kate Adie¹⁷:

¹⁷ Kate Adie is a former chief news correspondent and foreign correspondent for BBC News.

She has an atrophied feminine aspect. Kate is a very bad journalist. She's a very good journalist in the macho sense.

However, Brayne deemed O'Kane to be 'emotionally aware, very emotionally literate'. Brayne's singular view on gender, not articulated by any other interviewee, is:

Really effective journalists have a very strongly developed male and female aspect to them.

This rule of the game includes and promotes certain personalities but denigrates, excludes others. It validates (and invalidates) the quality of other journalists' work as either being emotionally intelligent or simply 'bad', 'macho', 'atrophied'. Brayne most critical remarks were aimed at Fisk and Pilger:

Robert Fisk is a really bad example, a classic example of a journalist who is profoundly emotional and completely in denial of the emotions. That tells us an awful lot about journalism, about the emotional literacy of the current journalistic cohort.

And Pilger:

And John Pilger is another one who is catastrophically dangerous because he doesn't feel so emotional.

If Brayne is right about 'the current journalistic cohort' being mainly emotional illiterates like Fisk, Pilger and so on, it is worthwhile also positing some other facts. An articulation of a discourse of 'good' and 'bad' journalism is also based on a subjective interpretation of emotional literacy. The rule that Allan Little is the epitome of emotional literacy and Lindsey Hilsum has a 'strong, macho' side is more prejudiced than impartial. It is hoped that, in the chapters to come, a more

nuanced picture emerges about the richness and diversity of the interviewees' agencies.

Like Snow, O'Kane is against the compartmentalization of emotion and objectivity:

But my view is that there is a sort of presumption that emotion is just some sort of professional lobotomy. You can feel extraordinarily emotional but the basic material, the rules that you apply as a conduit, which is basically what you are, still apply. Is this true? Is this honest? Does this reflect the story? Is this a narrative that you want to reveal the story? And in the process of processing that, you can sit and cry at your typewriter or your computer, as I've done. But I think feeling emotionally and strongly and passionately about it probably helps me to do a better job and feel a sense of responsibility. But the tools that I use to do that job are not compromised by the fact that I feel very strongly about it. And I've never written something down in a quote that is, in some way, not absolutely accurate.

On that basis, O'Kane rejects the objective model in favour of a more subjective, agentic, maybe more personal use of truth, where the journalistic self can make emotional judgements about the credibility of political voices:

I'm not interested in objectivity. I'm interested in truth. And this old idea about objectivity in the early years of the Balkans about, you know, let's be fair to the Serbs and Croats and the Muslims. We know what objectivity was there and there wasn't any objectivity. It was a genocidal war against the Bosnian Muslims carried out by the Serbs and then by the Croats. That would be seen as a statement of maximum objectivity. I come from a school that doesn't embrace objectivity. I come from a school that embraces truth. And the difficulty about this word, objectivity, is that, in the pursuit of that, we're dealing with a very sophisticated new media world where Radovan Karadjic will say to you, 'Sarajevo is full of rape camps'. Now, if you're interested in objectivity, you'll report that because you can't prove that it's not true. But it's a lie. Now I'm not going to give the same space to him to

report a lie as I am to Ali Isabegovic to say In the world that we live in it has become debased ... not debased, dysfunctional. You know, it's about experience. Forget the rules of, on the one hand, on the other hand, and search for a bigger truth.

It's the key to the whole thing in this. Objectivity and truth. And my thesis is that in the intent to be truthful about a situation, you have to apply journalistic methodology to your reporting. And because you feel emotional about it doesn't mean that you undermine the methodology or you don't do it properly. So what I'm saying is you can reach the truth and be emotional, as long as you are very strict with what you're doing, what you're reporting.

Maggie O'Kane's prescription is a sophisticated combination of honesty and accuracy, where the agentive self leads emotion out, through compassion, to a sincere, true depiction of the subject material but without 'kidnapping the pain' of subjects who are suffering and traumatized. This 'pain' has to remain separate from any pain experienced by the reporter. She advocates a subtle mix of truth and self, a discursive flow from the self to the truth, not the other way round. If the emotional directionality is switched back to the journalistic self, that is a travesty of the subject(s), a narcissistic intrusion in the story. This rule of the game is reflexive, rather than narcissistic. But O'Kane does not shy away from political truth, as an active agency between the journalist and her material. Like Fisk and Pilger, she decries the mask of objectivity in favour of an organic, unflattened and truthful discourse. Without the journalistic agent to guide the emotion out of himself or herself into the material, constituting an erstwhile complete denial of the self, objectivity emerges as a lie in the name of balance, rather than truth. So, the journalistic agent, the self, is the lynchpin, the political, moral, compassionate conduit in the relationship between subject material and truth. But the emotion has to flow outwards from the inner self to the outer subject material.

When I asked Loyd about the emotional dimension of reporting war, he maintained that too much emotion gives yourself away or makes the self intrusive:

But also, the ego ... you've got to watch your ego in it because it's very corrupting, particularly as a newspaper journalist, once you start getting patted on the back by your editor or you win an award or whatever.

Loyd favours reflexivity over narcissism. He is also aware of the danger of partiality:

The people who are reporting on that, on the one hand, have to be people who have quite a lot of common sense because, otherwise, there's a danger in ending up beating the drum. If you use too much [emotion], you give yourself away. There's definitely a time for actually taking a deep breath and trying to be a cool head and trying to be the man that Rudyard Kipling depicted in a war environment.

Loyd seems to be referring implicitly here to the danger of veering too far away from some sort of objective ideal, thereby implying two polarities in his theorization, the partial self and objectivity.

Jon Snow provides a useful example of self narcissistically getting in the way of the emotional flow between story and viewers with disparaging reference to John Simpson:

You've only got to look back at what was going on in Israel. He was on the Israeli side of the border at one stage and he would be there every night, live, on the six o'clock news standing next to whoever was presenting and they would say, 'What do you think, John?' And he would say, 'Well, I don't really know'. And I would think – who cares a fuck whether you know or you don't know, Simpson, don't tell me. Get on and talk about what's in front of you. Have you ever seen Simpson's World, for example? Shot with one camera in which a great man meets somebody rather less important than himself? He should be spared from himself and allowed to get on and do what he does best, which is report. But the Simpson persona has been encouraged to get between the viewer and information.

Snow attributes this intrusion more to BBC management manipulation than the singular Simpson persona, although they are clearly working in tandem. Simpson is probably the most successful 'objective' foreign correspondent who has managed to win awards and achieve popularity without questioning the institutional model. He compares interestingly with his former BBC colleague and foreign correspondent, who is an opponent of objectivity and a proponent of 'journalism of attachment'. Simpson has, in many ways, stretched the envelope of creating a famous individual persona without exercising the degree of partial agency that Fisk, Pilger and O'Kane do. What is interesting about Simpson is that, as an objective practitioner, his celebrity persona is interpreted by Snow as a personal intrusion rather than a political one; whereas, for someone like Pilger, there is no space for individual agency within BBC objective journalism. It could even be argued that, in Simpson's case, he has such a long and reliable track-record in the BBC that he has been allowed to develop a large persona because he guarantees an audience. He is given a longer leash, so to speak, as long as his agency does not stray into political agency or partiality. Allan Little makes a similar (to Snow's) but more diplomatic observation about Simpson:

I think people ... There's a reason why people buy his books, which is that they trust him. He is trusted by a huge audience. So he gets away with putting himself in it because people want to know what he thinks. He's become that trusted guide through complicated questions.

Because of the subjective unfixability of human agency, an 'objective' institution like the BBC needs an Archimedean point (Tuchman, 1972) that can fix objectivity in viewers' minds. In this way, Simpson's agency is a trustworthy, and maybe a moral face of objectivity. His emotional agency is sincerity and credibility that never strays into anger or outrage, a singular emotional tonality. Here, Simpson recognizes the constraint of his own emotional disposition, but he is in favour of multiple tones. Simpson, in my interview with him, extolled the virtues of Keane's 'emotionality' and aspired to using it more in his work. Similarly, Keane claimed that he aspired to be as intrepid as Simpson, maybe implying that he himself did not feel intrepid enough. This point is extended below.

A French television journalist talks about the 'funnel effect' (*phénomène de l'entonnoir*) to describe how the news system prefers to report disasters through the prism of one single emotion:

'There is only room for one overwhelming emotion a day or a week
...There'll always be forgotten countries'. (Poivre d'Arvor in Benthall, 1993:
28)

This highlights the problem of reification of emotion, template journalism, a form of 'centring'. It also refers to how international reports inevitably select certain wars, conflicts and crises as meriting more attention, often for political economic reasons. In this way, the foreign correspondent can be pacified into an instrument of foreign policy and public diplomacy. I will return to the point below, using Keane, Fisk and Pilger as examples.

Being an outsider, as a key rule of the game of foreign correspondence, can be viewed as an attribute that enhances objectivity because it places the journalist outside the narrative, as a kind of ideal witness, outside the frame of universal history. In other words, the implication is that one can only see what is going on objectively if one's agency is pared down to the efficacy of a scientific instrument. The relationship between objectivity and witnessing will be investigated as a concept in Chapter Five.

4.2: History and emotion

The topic of emotion is rather new in media studies. The history of emotion in journalism was sketched out by several of my interviewees. Out of all the BBC interviewees, Fergal Keane did not appeal to objectivity in the same way as Simpson, Little and Bowen, but rather to the whole historical sweep of journalism and not only BBC journalism. It is noteworthy, in this respect, that Keane, without pointing the finger particularly at the BBC, was the most critical of the five BBC journalists about institutional journalism, in general. The closest he came to

criticizing the BBC was by recommending that I interview BBC news managers to question them about their editorial decisions.

One thing, however, that objectivity has in common with history (that is a modern, not a postmodern understanding of history, one that uncritically attaches itself to the notion of a singular and universal history) is that they both conceptually attempt to fix meaning outside of the human agent, externalizing reality and constraining the role of the self in constructing it. Because emotion is seen by all the interviewees as the exclusive preserve of instinct and the unconscious mind, there is very little scope for producing emotion at will and altering it except as fabrication or manipulation. However, as a BBC foreign correspondent, Keane was relatively self-reflexive about his own emotional agency. He made the point that 'emotionalism' has always been in print and television journalism:

Go and read Hemingway's dispatches, go back, read Ed Murrow, William Shirer, anyone like that.

Maggie O'Kane, on the other hand, identified an important historical shift in the use of print journalistic emotion, which coincided loosely with the end of the Cold War and the rise of 'new journalism':

I think it's a post 'new journalism'. I think we're talking about a form of post-'new journalism' and a different way of writing. Although, when you look at the Nuremberg trials, and the description of Nuremberg, it's one of the most emotional and moving things you will ever read. And the reason is because we were given the space to write, that actually captured the humanity of the situation. What I am saying now is ... not even post-Cold War, but in the last 20 years probably, there has been a change in the style of newspaper writing which has allowed us to explore the nuances of the situation and the way that the press explored it in Nuremberg. And as a result, it's much more impactful and emotional. I don't necessarily think it's because journalists have become more emotional. It's because we are allowed to write in that way, and the real constraint of Russell who went off to the Boer War, there's no way Russell could describe lots of young

men dying in the trenches, because that wasn't the vocabulary of war that he was allowed to report.

O'Kane points to an important historical and cultural change from about 1985 which gradually altered the culture of journalism and permitted an emotional dimension in journalism; although she traces it back to the reporting of a rather exceptional historical event, that of the Nuremburg trials, after the Second World War. From a political economic perspective, the 1980s was a decade that saw the neo-liberalization of British and America.

O'Kane gives the use of emotion a sense of modern historical originality whereas Keane maintains that it has existed throughout the twentieth century. Bowen, like O'Kane, maintains that 'we are more of an emotionally labile society than we were'. Despite his view on the historical ubiquity of 'emotionalism' in journalism, Fergal Keane regards the end of the Cold War as a watershed in the history of journalism:

I think there's a really important period that you need to look at. And when people write the history of our journalism in decades to come, look at the period 1990 to 1994, and what happened to a generation of journalists that went through Bosnia and Rwanda. It was an absolute cauldron! It changed all of us who'd experienced that particular time. It was sort of four years of sort of emotional and psychological pressure, which had an immense impact on the way we saw the world, on the way we did our jobs. I think the institutional change you're only going to begin seeing in the next decade or so. I think what people witnessed, the level of atrocity, the level of our abandonment by what we believed were responsible forces in the world, had a real impact on people. If you can talk to Allan [Little], it would be worth talking to him about this.

The significance of this four-year period was acknowledged by other interviewees such as Allan Little, Anthony Loyd and Maggie O'Kane (and Martin Bell, Michael Nicholson, Janine di Giovanni and Christiane Amanpour, who are not

interviewees¹⁸), but arguably affected them in different ways to Fergal Keane in terms of the way they saw the world and the way they did their jobs. This will be taken up in detail in the chapters that follow.

The historical period of 1990-4, directly following the end of the Cold War, seems to mark a significant historical stage in the journalistic careers of Little et al., a period where they witnessed a degree of civil conflict, violence and brutality never witnessed by them before, that affected them in a way they had never been affected before, that stretched their frames or templates for the use of emotion and objectivity to breaking point. What may have been remarkable about this period, for this generation of foreign correspondents, is that they came closer to human suffering and death than they had hitherto in their institutional careers, in much the same way as a previous generation of correspondents had done in Vietnam.

Robert Fisk actually identifies history as the main motivational driver of his work:

It's history. What keeps me going is the same way I read a book at night. I am reading a book at the moment I can't put down. It's Anthony Beevor's new book on the Spanish Civil War.

Unfortunately, I did not ask Fisk to expand this important point. However, elsewhere Fisk has stated, 'I think that if you are a foreign correspondent, you are a kind of historian' (2006).¹⁹ But it is important to point out that Fisk constitutes his agency, his primary rule of the game, as having a significant moral dimension, giving more time to the victims of history than the history makers. He cites Richard Dimbleby's reporting of the Second World War as a major influence:

Reporters in the Second World War wrote brilliantly emotionally. Richard Dimbleby was in a Lancaster bomber over the Hamburg fire storm. 'All I see in front of me is a great white basin of light in the sky'. Jesus, what

¹⁸ See Chapter Seven for auto/biographical analysis of Bell, Nicholson, di Giovanni and Amanpour.

¹⁹ 'Conversations with History': <http://globetrotter.berkeley.edu/conversations/>; 14/12/06.

language, the use of language! You know, Alan, what was his name? He wrote a wonderful book called Gallipoli. The point is that reporters in the Second World War could write most beautifully. If you want to see a beautiful written book about the Battle of Britain, want to read a book called The Last Enemy by a Battle of Britain pilot, Richard somebody. It's a wonderful book. It's a book about fear and compassion. It's a very short book. He died in the war. His plane crashed. The Last Enemy, it's called. You must read it.

Here Fisk brings in the dimension of writing and use of language to emotional agency, although he, of course, would call it morality, not emotion. Although he maintains that his use of emotion is not something he usually gives much thought to, in other words, that it is not conscious, he clearly does think about his use and style of language, and maybe employs an emotive style for which he has received a good degree of critical acclaim. This 'feel for the game' is not dissimilar from more objective practitioners such as Snow, Bowen and Robertson.

Keane, Little, O'Kane, Loyd and Fisk all refer to each other in this regard as journalists who are able to express compassion or empathy beautifully. John Simpson makes an observation about Little and Keane that singles them out not for their use of language, as such, but for their moral humanity and a kind of specialist compassionate agency:

... if you are able to take a step back and look at the thing as a totality, one of the qualities that makes a good foreign correspondent, Allan Little is a perfect example, Fergal Keane, too. I mean, these are people with real understanding for the human condition. That means that their reporting is, I think, lifted up above the ordinary on to something better. If you are just concerned with how many people have been killed and who did it and why, that's fine, that's very good but myself as a kind of senior character who used to appoint people to jobs as foreign correspondents, if I had some seething mass of eager determination and ambition on one hand and I had an Allan or a Fergal on the other, there's no doubt which I would have chosen because Fergal and Allan are rounded, decent, moral-minded

people. They are not just concerned with getting on, and getting in ahead of the opposition and showing themselves up to good advantage and all of that: they are concerned with what they are seeing.

I asked Keane if there were any contemporaries that he regarded as working in the same emotional vein as him:

Allan Little, if you listen to his brilliant reporting, a really good reporter, his work in Bosnia. In print, Maggie O'Kane, Anthony Loyd of The Times.

Interestingly, when Fisk talks about *The Last Enemy*, he is referring to a book, a memoir, rather than a news report, constituting an interesting elision. Nevertheless, he is positing the Second World War, a historical period sixty years earlier than the 'cauldron' of 1990 to 1994, as an influence on his use of emotion in journalism. Clearly, this is not a period of time during which he was active as a foreign correspondent, but it does seem to have some personal significance for him, given that his father fought in the Second World War. What is interesting about the two periods, however, is the fact that the latter precedes the Cold War and the former follows it, suggesting maybe that there was something different about how the Cold War was reported before, during and after. In other words, did the degree of social violence of the major conflicts reported by the research group represent a historical change that affected their use of emotion, which had not been experienced since the generation of reporters that witnessed the Second World War – a new but not unprecedented level of societal conflict, breakdown and human brutality, as mooted by Keane? As well as William Howard Russell, an Irish reporter with *The Times* who is considered to have been one of the first modern war correspondents after he spent twenty-two months covering the Crimean War (1853-6), Snow praises the work of Richard Dimbleby:

I'm sort of thinking of Richard Dimbleby during the Second World War, and I'm thinking he was fairly emotional, but he was also factual.

Likewise, Pilger refers to Russell as 'his hero':

The last British war that was reported without censorship was the Crimea. And my hero, William Howard Russell, if you read Russell's diaries, plenty of emotion, plenty of facts; he got a few things wrong, but he was independent-minded. And nothing has changed. That should be the journalist today.

What is interesting about Pilger's historical frame and validation of Russell's emotional style is that he believes that what went wrong in the history of use of emotion reporting conflict is the inception of the BBC as an example of institutionalization of reporting, leading to 'objective' and 'false', 'gratuitous' use of emotion. It may be significant that this roughly coincides with the historical period of post-Second World War British news right up until the end of the Cold War. Therefore, as Keane articulated it, maybe the so-called post-Cold War 'new' wars led to a kind of puncturing of this 'objective' practice that demanded a new, more urgent, emotional and personal style of reporting that had not been used since the Second World War.

Snow was quite outspoken with his view that new technology, in a historical sense, has directly affected how foreign correspondents work and report:

You know, I think it's a consequence, not a driver. And I'm saying I think it's a product of change in the process of news-gathering, rather than we've become a more emotional breed of people or whatever. I say it's technologically driven.

Such a technological determinist discourse squeezes the subjectivity out of the use of media technology, instrumentalizing the subject under the object, a passive kind of agency.

To conclude this section, there has been a historical ebb and flow of use of emotion in foreign correspondence, peaking during the two World Wars of the last century, Vietnam and the wars in former Yugoslavia. What all these wars have in

common is an immediacy that demanded a different kind of agency from contemporary journalists which pushed and punctured the mould of objectivity. Keane and Little both agree that the suffering they witnessed in the conflicts after the end of the Cold War, Bosnia and Rwanda in particular, were more traumatic than material they had faced before. This view was less intensely shared by the rest of the interviewees.

4.3: Unconscious emotion

All interviewees without exception agreed that their practical use of emotion is 'instinctual', 'unconscious' and 'inflicted' (from outside the self on to the self). Therefore, even though not all of them subscribe to objectivity, in terms of agency, their use of emotion is understood to be outside, to be kept at bay, denied and let in with discretion. The agentive self is construed by 'objective' practitioners as separate from the story; the subject as divorced from the object. That is why those practitioners who detract from objectivity nevertheless maintain that truthful reporting is still possible without the conscious emotion that leads to artificiality and inappropriate insertions of selves into stories. In sum, the inner self is deemed complex and dangerous whereas external reality is fixable either through objectivity or some kind of ethics-based truth system. Robert Fisk is adamant that his use of emotion is not something he thinks about in his work:

Well, I mean you're sort of, you know, you're projecting something into my journalism which I don't think about. Look, as a human being, like a bus driver or person who owns a cinema or ... e ... someone who bakes bread, if I go on the street and I see something terrible, I feel very strongly, like you know, car bombs ... terrible, and I feel very angry about it. I don't see why as a journalist my anger can't be there in my work.

This last statement suggests that anger is not only part of Fisk's motivation, that which drives him to write, but is actually in the writing itself. It would suggest that he regards other professional conscious use of emotion as problematic. Like Pilger,

he has a strong sense of a normal (unconscious) 'human' response to conflict, which does not differentiate him from any other human being, from his readership. For him, the journalistic emotional response to conflict and trauma has to derive from a universal human moral and emotional reaction to what he witnesses in Middle Eastern conflict, which, he claims, is more often than not, an angry one. Fisk's designation of anger as natural in conflict reporting fits Muhlmann's (2008: 13) argument that tragedy, i.e. a traumatic event, demands a departure from routine objective journalistic 'rules of the game':

'For example, it is a common journalistic practice to oppose at least two points of view (the "both sides" rule), but journalists also need to know when not to apply this rule, especially in treatment of tragic events'.

Muhlmann's theoretical position attempts to escape the entrenched political stand-off between objectivists and polemicists. Schudson (1995: 13) echoes this point:

'... by unspoken understanding, there are not two sides to human tragedies'.

Robertson believes he writes best instinctually:

... some of the stories that I have written that have been most successful have been the ones where I've written at the end of extreme sleep deprivation, extreme hours and where perhaps the thought process is wholly more fluid than it would normally be.

This prescription is in line with the theoretical postulation of 'feel for the game'. Hilsum also made this comment on Keane:

He's Irish. He's got the gift of the gab. He can't help it.

Fergal Keane himself regards his own emotional style as unconscious. I asked him whether, as claimed by Mark Easton, he felt that he was used by the BBC to report particular kinds of stories that engage audiences emotionally:

I don't do that consciously. I mean I just do it the way, there's a way I can do things. I have tried to be, as I said, in the last few years, much more forensic. I've tried to resist the 'when there's a famine, let's send Fergal', and I've said 'no', I've said 'no' on quite a few occasions.

For Keane, his emotion is reliable but not always appropriate to the subject-matter, so that he has had to make a more conscious effort to wrestle it into a more 'forensic' form. For him, to be forensic is to take more time to investigate a story, to dig deeper instead of being parachuted into a conflict to produce a report within hours. The danger of this is that the lack of journalistic time makes the contextual content inversely proportional to the form, the journalistic agency. In other words, the relative sparseness of contextual background can make more demand on the individual journalist to put herself into the piece; at which point the journalist becomes too much part of the story, and the presentation becomes formulaic. This point was supported by Hilsum:

There is a fashion for personalizing reporting. And I am very wary of it. And I think there are some people who can do it and it engages the viewer but I think it's been overdone and now it's almost expected of a reporter and then what that does is it homogenizes all situations. So you could be in Rwanda or you could be in Sri Lanka or you could be in Iraq or anywhere. It's all kind of terrible and miserable and in the end we are informing people about what is going on in the world. We are not parading our own misery. We're trying to explain what's going on. I don't like reports which just tell people how terrible it is. I like reports which help people understand why it's like that. And if you get totally into the emotion of the situation and away from the intellectual understanding then you're actually not doing your job as a journalist which is trying to help people understand.

It is pertinent that, at the time of my interview, Keane regarded his best piece of foreign correspondent forensic journalism to date as a BBC *Panorama* documentary on Darfur, not a news report. He reflexively acknowledges here a conflict between BBC editorial use of emotion and his own, that his 'emotional' style has, on occasion, become an institutional device for formulaic reporting affecting tragic, sad stories. He implies that this is a somewhat artificial way of using emotion because it comes from him rather than the story itself. This is similar to Loyd and Snow's misgivings about emotional agency and the danger of narcissistic 'giving yourself away'. For Keane, it is a denigration of his professionalism as well as a manipulation of viewers. Narcissistic agency could be construed as an example of entertainment values, 'infotainment', creeping into broadcast journalism. It also tends to reduce the amount of contextual information in a news report, a point taken up below in Chapters Five and Six. Like Fisk and Simpson, Keane implies that good emotion is unconscious and bad emotion more likely to be consciously contrived and unnatural but, unlike Fisk, he has professional concerns about being stereotyped that are not seemingly shared by Fisk. What separates Fisk and Keane in this regard is that Fisk's sense of his emotional self is flatter and less reflexive than Keane's. Fisk externalizes emotion in such a way that he regards the relationship between his inner self and outer events as relatively mechanical. Keane, on the other hand, maybe because he is a generation younger, is willing to problematize his own proclivity for emotion and how that affects his perception and depiction of external events. This makes Keane more self-critical as well as self-reflexive.

Allan Little believes that his use of emotion is 'intuitive' and, therefore, unconscious. Snow concurs with Fisk, Keane and Little that emotion is beyond conscious control and can only be denied or let out discretely:

But you're describing this as a situation over which one apparently has some control. 'Shall I be objective, or shall I be emotional?' is not a question you find yourself asking in the field. What happens is you – in effect, what you're really saying is, should you deny your emotion or not? Your emotion is going to occur anyway. Whether you want to be objective or not, the fact is you're going to be emotionally hit. The question is, do you share that with the viewer or not? Or do you deny it to the viewer? 'Dear viewer, I saw this

and it had absolutely no impact at all, it's perfectly okay, and it wouldn't have any impact on you, either.' No, the best thing is to stick with an honest and coherent account of what you've seen.

Snow's prescription for journalistic use of emotion is based on the needs of the audience overriding an individual relationship or a political relationship with what he reports. This supports the 'centring' institutional rule of the game. Emotion, according to Snow, inflicts itself on you, so you can only adopt different degrees of resistance. If emotion is not resisted, it can lead to 'embroilment', impairment of facts and loss of context. I asked Snow if he had experienced any moments, like Steven Sackur in Halabja, Iraq (1988), Allan Little in Sarajevo, Fergal Keane in Rwanda, Michael Nicholson in Sarajevo (interview question 4); journalistic moments where the situation led to a kind of emotional overload which demanded something personal, extraneous to the expected norm:

Oh, see you've used the word 'demand'. That's a very value-laden word. I would say 'inflicts'. You see. I mean, it's a question of whether you have any choice in the matter.

I then asked him if he believed that all events impact on everybody in the same way:

I think there are situations which impact on any human being in more or less the same way.

The rule of the game here for Snow is neutrality or impartiality. Snow also concurs with Fisk that certain kinds of emotionality are, by definition, universally human. It is when you try to consciously manipulate and process your own emotion that distortion, error, subjectivity and bias creep in. Snow also makes the point that, if you reflect on your own emotional reaction, if you do not check your own emotional responses, you are liable to look inwards too much at the expense of outwards, the story. This would facilitate a narcissistic intrusion. What is more, he

believes that emotional self-evaluation is likely to muddy the waters of the story and lead to a less coherent story:

I think there's always a danger, but I think the bigger danger, actually, is that you're so embroiled in the emotion that you lose sight of where the facts are, and what's going on underneath. I don't think he [Fergal Keane] – of course, you know, if you win a lot of awards and you have a very high profile there is a degree of cultism about what you do. But I don't accuse him of putting himself into it. I think the danger is that you get caught up in the maelstrom of emotion and you lose sight of actually what the story is about.

This rule refers to the danger of narcissistic intrusion but also constitutes a reflective comment on the danger of too much reflexivity. Snow is saying here that a degree of notoriety gives journalists licence to use emotion because it garners popularity and awards. All the interviewees, without exceptions, have won awards. This phenomenon will be further analysed in Chapter Seven. The point is supported by an experienced journalist, Mark Latey (NATO press division) in Seaton (2005: 246):

'The individual's reputation is made not by reporting the truth or analyzing the factors that go into war, but rather by feeding the appetite for feeling'.

The journalistic competition for awards constitutes another rule of the game. Snow also underlines the point that emotion by itself is one-dimensional and superficial, that good journalism has several levels, which include emotion and context or story. John Pilger regards most journalists' use of emotion as 'subliminal' or unconscious:

Most news reporting sees the movement of people, human beings, in whatever situation, through a telescope provided by many things, provided by their employers, by their education, by their internalizing of so much of

the undeclared rules of how we're meant to perceive the world, so that much of it is subliminal.

This is the rule of the game of proper distance. Pilger sees the emotional roots of journalistic witnessing in the self and, therefore, subject to cultural and political power whereas the 'objective' journalists believe that this kind of emotional introspection sullies the view of the professional journalist, de-professionalizes him or her. Pilger's statement reinforces the theory that distance between journalist and subjects of stories is a problem for him, as epitomized in objectivity. Pilger is referring to institutional constraint (employers' 'rules of the game') and educational constraint. By 'most news reporting' he seems to be implying that he is outside of the 'most'. What makes his prescription for use of emotion stand out is that he co-opts his emotional political outlook from the people that he is reporting, not from what he calls powerful people whom he regards as necessarily reduced to instruments of power.

I asked Pilger if it was not the case that everyone is prey to subliminal biases, identifications and so on and whether it was possible to consciously not identify with one party or religion or something more than another thing:

Yes, but you're talking in human terms. That's a separate argument completely. If you are speaking about a human tragedy that's in front of your eyes or a human misery, reporting in wartime, the most precious thing you can hang on to is your own sense of humanity and your own compassion. The moment you think you can step over, almost literally, human bodies, then, if that was me, it would be time to go.

This is Pilger's formulation of emotional agency, his rule of the game, as moral and political agency, as emotional attachment in the form of compassion. In order to ensure that you do not become complicit with power, you have to identify as strongly and closely as possible, be compassionate with, the people that you regard as victims of power in a conflict, to in effect amouflage yourself amongst those with weaker agency. Like Fisk, he identifies with people he sees as outside of and victims of institutional power. Pilger makes a distinction, a 'separation' between human

and political domains, between what he sees as a natural compassionate unconscious human emotional response to others' suffering and a different kind of more conscious political reflexivity about one's own values. His rule of the game is a kind of self-embedded, human compassion that is reflexive enough to resist reifying or objectifying people.

Allan Little is unapologetic about espousing BBC cultural values, values that Pilger rejects:

We are a value-based industry. We value our own existence. We value our work. We value the foundations on which it's built, and these come out of the kind of liberal societies that grew up on both sides of the north Atlantic in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. It's rooted in that cultural soil. To say you can be neutral about that, I am not completely neutral about the BBC. I love the BBC. I believe in it. I believe in its values. I think they're good. I think they are a force for good in the world.

I then asked Little if this meant that he believed in a 'good' cultural bias in the form of the BBC, not a neutral one:

Yes. I don't see how you can do this, I don't see how you can be in this industry.

Little comes close here to agreeing that BBC objectivity is a cultural and political bias, a value-based partial institution rather than a scientific monolith. This sits awkwardly with the rule of the game of impartiality. And Pilger separates 'good' compassionate journalism from 'bad' political journalism. All of this points to the fact that there is more to 'objective' and 'political' journalism than meets the eye. At first sight, one would not expect Little to be making a political argument and Pilger a universalist one. Maybe this is a way into the problem of journalistic agency that disables the notion that one side in the debate has the moral high ground. It almost suggests that these two approaches complement each other and are more interdependent than their mirroring, double-binding mutual distrust allows. Of

course, I believe that Pilger would argue that, in terms of power and audience reach, there is not a fair and equal distribution of approaches. It may even be a view that is quietly shared by some 'objectivists'. This is a point that I will take up again in the Conclusion (Chapter Eight).

4.4: Foreign correspondent as outsider

At the beginning of this chapter, I talked about how the self-image of being an outsider was very common, maybe universal, among my interviewees. This will be further discussed in Chapter Seven when I examine foreign correspondent autobiographies. It could be argued that this self-image is an ideal agency that refuses to problematize its suture between inner and outer, subject and object, truth and opinion. As Bauman argues, the agency of the stranger is a radical position. Outsiderliness sits comfortably alongside other ideal notions such as objectivity and unconscious emotion. It places all conflict and alienation as outside the journalist. It is a reflective as well as a narcissistic position. If a foreign correspondent is regarded as an outsider or regards him/herself as such, what is she an outsider to? The answer to such a question is mostly outside the scope of this thesis, but does connect with some observations about autobiography and life narratives in Chapter Seven. In 2006, Fisk made the following characterization of journalists, which seems to suggest that journalists, by virtue of being restless, seek out restless situations, a kind of psychological predisposition:

‘The only person who can be a journalist has a bug and journalism is the only thing in the world you can do. If that’s you, you will be a journalist’.

Maybe Fisk is referring here to his motivational anger, some life-changing event in early life. Like Keane, he is perhaps saying that journalism is a deployment of subjective, early life experience. The epitome of dispassionate distance is, of course, the foreign correspondent as outsider, an ideal witness (see 5.2). Bowen said:

I think it's very important that journalists feel like outsiders. I think we do our best work as outsiders.

Bowen made an autobiographical link between his childhood and outsider identity:

I wasn't very popular at junior school. I was never in the 'in' crowd.

Simpson once wrote similarly:

... being an outsider: uncommitted, frank, unimpressed; I think that journalists tend to differentiate themselves from the people they're reporting on.

Once again, for Simpson, being an outsider seems to entail a psychological state of individuation, of political immunity, autonomy and self-reliance. Note that, unlike Fisk, he characterizes himself as indifferent but sincere. This seems to connect with his comment that he does not like crowds:

I don't like centres; it's a bit like, if I were an alcoholic, I don't think I'd go to AA I just think that's the last thing I'd do. I mean, it's a personal thing. It's not because of any kind of disapproval of anything. I just don't like groups very much.

Pilger qualifies the journalistic attribute of outsider with institutional independence but presumably not independence from the subjects of journalistic writing. I asked Pilger to what extent he believed being an outsider or thinking one is, was a desirable attribute:

A journalist must be an outsider so, if that's an outsider, so be it. But, above all, a journalist must be independent. Carting around all theses nostrums

from Lord Reith who actually bent the system the moment he started the BBC anyway, or what a media college will tell them has nothing to do with journalism.

Keane celebrates Simpson's 'outsiderliness':

He [John Simpson]'s an outsider. He may speak with that accent and have gone to a public school but I think there the similarity ends. If you look at his childhood, which is very fractured, I think John's strength may be that he speaks with that voice and they may sometimes think that he is of them, but he is actually an outsider, he is one of life's outsiders.

For Keane, having a fractured childhood, which he himself had, is an asset for being a journalist who can blend in with power, but always keep something back. This may well be true, but Simpson and Pilger, for example, deploy their 'outsiderliness' in very different political ways. While there is a consensus on 'outsiderliness' being a desirable foreign correspondent trait, there is a dissensus on how to deploy such a trait.

I asked Keane if he felt a good journalist is an outsider experientially:

I think a lot of journalists are not comfortable in their own skin.

Fisk seems to want to celebrate his refusal to respect political lines:

All the time, when I'm on the battlefield, I'm always accidentally crossing the front line, and going to have tea with someone who's in the wrong bit of the country I'm in.

Loyd believes that an outsider identity enhances his ability to report conflict and war. I asked him if he had always felt like an outsider and, if so, whether it enhanced his journalism and his ability to engage emotionally with strangers:

I feel alright with it. I think there are fantastic things about this country. I think, you know, I don't feel a complete alien here at all, but that identity of an outsider I, I think, important. It's important to recognize it. It's important to understand that in feeling that, rather than feel disadvantaged, to feel advantaged, and also if that's your standpoint and then you spend enough time going to wars, you feel a little bit of an outsider anyway. You can feel a little bit of an outsider in a war because you're foreign. You can doubly feel an outsider because you're coming back into a society, that might be changing a bit now, that doesn't know wars.

He makes the interesting observation that, with time, he has become even more adept and comfortable at working alone:

Yes. Definitely. Most of the I work more alone now than I used to.

I asked Loyd whether being an outsider leads to disengagement:

No, but it's a very good self perception to have as a journalist because it means that you are far less liable to bind some sort of national agenda with your own nation's agenda.

Loyd discloses that being an outsider is a kind of ideal independent individual who always places him/herself outside of national discourse, especially that of his/her own nation. I asked Loyd whether an outsider self-perception is a matter of maturity:

Put it this way, and I am talking about foreign correspondents and war correspondents as opposed to the rest, although there's more connection between news tabloid journalists and foreign correspondents than they might like to think, there is quite a world between them as well. I mean you get a home news journalist

sent out from London now, hey now, we've got an MOD trip coming up to be with our boys in Afghanistan, the boy's going to go down, he's going to think, our boys, let's do it. Oh yes, and here is the press liaison guy, let's get him on, get him down and get him a few beers and all the rest of it, and they're not going to want to challenge too much. Some of them do and that's not a blanket accusation but you get someone like Kurt [Schork] who goes there, who's not afraid to conflict and challenge, to have a conflict with and challenge a press minder.

Like Fisk, Loyd constitutes good foreign correspondence as a disposition to challenge, maybe even mistrust authority. This is the ideal investigative journalist type.

I asked Simpson why he believed being a 'damaged' outsider was an advantage for a foreign correspondent, based on a remark he had made several years earlier: 'There's something slightly wrong with most of us, don't you feel? We're damaged goods, usually with slightly rumpled private lives and unconventional backgrounds. Outsiders looking in at others from the outside' (Barber, 2002).

I don't know how good it is because people who are like that have usually lots of personality difficulties of one kind or another. So I'd don't think I'd say 'so, I'm designing a news organization, I'm going to go out and discover people with complex and probably unsatisfactory lives and hire them because they make the best journalists'. I don't think I'd do that because you'd also get lots of qualities you might not like; as indeed a television newsroom would show, people awkward, people sometimes too emotional, sometimes too unemotional, sometimes too driven by ego and so on, all working out their different problems. I just think that is what happens. Those are the people that tend to gravitate to journalism. I'm like it myself. I can't really think of a friend of mine or a colleague of mine certainly who isn't a bit like that, except in one or two cases where people are so sort of [laughs] dull that, you know ... And I was thinking the other day about how I noticed a video in a shop, Elephant Walk, a really crap film, with Elizabeth Taylor, made about 1953 or something, absolute crap, I mean awful,

unwatchable, dreadful. But I watched it when it came out, aged nine, and there's a scene right at the start of it where Elizabeth Taylor and whoever the hero is meet in a bookshop, and it's pouring with rain outside, and there's something about the shots through the window from the rain into the bookshop and then from the bookshop out through the window out into the rain: that captured my feelings and imagination when I was nine years old and still does. And it's something to do with being an outsider looking in at things.

4.5: Embedded journalism

The issue of embedding was not one of my interview questions but it arose as an important angle on objectivity for two of the interviewees, Robertson and Hilsum. Another angle for examining the agentive difference between objective journalists and political ones is by looking at the binary as institutional and independent/freelance, institutional meaning working for a television news organization or a newspaper and independent meaning autonomous. Out of the fourteen interviewees, eleven are institutional, two are former institutional voices (Pilger and Brayne) and only one, Linda Melvern, is working as an independent investigative journalist, although she used to work for *The Evening Standard* and *The Sunday Times*.

Pilger began his newspaper reporting career in Australia in 1958, became freelance in 1962, worked on the Middle East Reuters desk from 1962-3 and was chief foreign correspondent for *The Daily Mirror* from 1963 to 1986. Brayne was a Reuters correspondent, then a BBC radio foreign correspondent from 1975-1992. Arguably, the introduction of the practice of embedding reporters is an extension, a continuation from state or commercial institutional control to military control. One of the interviewees, Nic Robertson, an English CNN senior foreign correspondent, was embedded in Iraq when I interviewed him. Given that he was speaking to me while on professional standby, the tone of the conversation was different: there was more urgency. It was an interview with a foreign correspondent who was on the ground and on duty.

Here is how Robertson articulates the quality of being embedded:

There is little time. Generally, I find in Iraq there is little time off and, in there, you are working around someone else's time frame, so you have to go and film what you can go and film and then you've still got to make your deadlines.

For Robertson, embedding is a physical, spatial as well as a temporal constraint:

To a degree, the embed process is an aligning of two very different interests. It's an aligning of the Pentagon's realization that they need to get their message to the audience at home, propaganda, if you will, and there's a realization, for the journalists, that an embed situation is the only way to get in and find what's happening, and to really understand.

It's a huge constraint when trying to talk to Iraqi people and hear their views. We cannot travel independently around Iraq. And the Iraqis that I will meet through the US military will, for the most part, for example, the government, the mayor and all these people will obviously be sympathetic to one particular view, to the building of the Iraqi government and perhaps not given to speaking about the things that make them angry. However, we are able to talk to people who do express anger and who are upset, and will talk to us and will talk to us openly. But it's not the same and definitely not as easy as going out and talking to people before. The very fact that we can't drive around by ourselves means you just can't go and talk. You just cannot drive out and pick a place where you want to talk to people. You've got to take the opportunity as it's presented. We have local staff working for us who are able to. So we have information but it's not in the way that we would traditionally go and collect it. Certainly it's frustrating and certainly it has limitations. I still believe the dynamic may yet change, slip more out of control and make it harder but it will become even harder to find out what people are thinking or what has occurred in a certain area. For example, take the example in Mahmoudiya, the recent spate of killings,

in the past you would have gone down and talked to the people in the house next door, and you would have built your own independent picture of what happened down there. Associated Press has been able to go down with a TV crew and dig that story up. None of us want to do it that way and it's not as good. But I would say that we might be missing some of the shade but I think we're getting all the colours. I think we're getting the story but it's not as good.

Robertson understands embedding to be a spatial and temporal constraint, reducing access to the Iraqi people, so also a moral constraint. Hilsum's position on embedded journalism is not dissimilar to Robertson's. In places like Iraq, she sees a stark choice between getting killed, hence no story, or getting a partial story:

You can be embedded with the Americans or you cannot report it. You cannot be embedded on the other side because they will slit your throat.

The practice of embedding, of corralling foreign correspondents, clearly leads to a more overt form of institutional control as well as state control. In the case of Iraq, news organizations like CNN or Channel Four are controlled by the military arm of the American state, the Pentagon. The net effect of this, from the point of view of the foreign correspondent, seems to be an even tighter set of 'rules of the game', a state squeezing an institution squeezing the correspondent, not so much a new set of rules but more repressive old ones in spatial, temporal and ethical terms.

4.6: Conclusion

To sum up this chapter, all the institutional respondents acknowledged the 'rules of the game' outlined in Chapter Two: objectivity, impartiality, centring, audiences, proper distance for mediating human suffering and audiences, outsiderliness and reflexivity. Keane's experience of reporting 7/7/05 powerfully

illustrates impartiality (albeit indirectly), proper distance, outsiderliness and centring, as well as feel for the game and compassion.

Narcissism is attributed to certain styles of emotional reporting but is mostly not self-attributed. Channel Four practitioners are argued by BBC practitioners such as Little to have more institutional scope for partiality. 'Rules of the game' that emerged are unconscious feel for the game, compassionate agency, the boundary between foreign and home, garnering journalistic prizes and embedding. Embedding as a process is interesting because it seems to be designed to inhibit the journalists' ability to practice in an environment of action, a complex agency outside of military and state control. All the interviewees agree that external issues are more expedient than internal ones in their use of emotion reporting conflict and trauma. Where they disagree is the way in which they interpret these outside events, which is clearly affected by their interpretations or attempts to separate external from internal. Their interpretations are linked with institutional constraints (Bowen, Little, Simpson, Robertson, Snow, Hilsum and Loyd), moral loyalties and emotional attachments (Fisk, O'Kane and Pilger). Keane and Brayne have institutional constraints as well as emotional attachments. Melvern, without institutional constraint, has strong emotional attachments and moral loyalties. Journalists supporting BBC agency (Little, Simpson and Bowen) and Melvern advocate the most distance between journalist and story and the most constrained form of agency (See Figure 2 below). In other words, for the BBC interviewees, there is only room for agency within the space of objectivity, as they conceive it. This model applies also to embedded journalism and may be regarded as institutional constraint within institutional constraint, a diluted form of subjectivity. Keane and Little have both experienced 'traumatic' episodes in their careers where they believe they were temporarily unable to fulfil the objectives of objective reporting (see also Chapter Five). For Keane, it was in South Africa and Rwanda, for Little in Bosnia. Little was not able to report the UK IRA bombing campaign objectively for political reasons. He attributes BBC partisan reporting to a 'toxic public discourse'. On the whole, Little and Keane both criticize their own agency for these difficulties and attribute the breakdown to personal problems, although Keane professes that BBC editors played a role in encouraging his stereotypical 'emotional' persona. Brayne, as an ex-BBC foreign correspondent and now psychotherapist believes, not unlike Robertson, that it is possible to be

objective and emotionally intelligent. Robertson claims that all British journalism is more 'editorial' than American journalism.

As stated above, Channel Four journalists (Snow and Hilsum) are perceived by others to have more scope for individual, interpretative political agency, although in some ways Snow and Hilsum both employ objective agency that is not dissimilar from BBC objective agency. Loyd (*The Times*) also subscribes to an imputed objective model, which can become threatened by excessive emotional (narcissistic) agency. O'Kane and Fisk advocate a relatively wider, progressive scope for agency and fully reject the objective model as being too restrictive and conservative. They consider that it leases too much individual agency to state and corporate power at the expense of less powerful and more needy social and economic elements. O'Kane's and Fisk's senses of agency can be characterized as broadly more moral and political. Pilger is the most outspoken of the research group against objectivity and for independence. However, his 'on the ground' approach endorses dependence on 'the people' that must not separate itself from the people. So, both Pilger and the BBC play down agency but for ostensibly different reasons: the former to support bottom-up people power and the latter to enable objectivity. Figure 2 demonstrates that the story is situated between institutional and political agencies, but nearer to political agents in terms of emotional attachment; or prejudice, depending which way you look at it. Of course, objective journalists tend to be more emotionally attached to their audience, imaginary or real.



Figure 2: The story

The majority of interviewees constitute their reflexive 'selves' outside of their reports, leaving minimal, instrumental selves as recorders and transmitters of the emotions of Others. With the exceptions of Fisk and Pilger²⁰, they represent emotion as a kind of individual 'toning' (Simpson's word, attributed particularly to the work of Keane and Little), presented alongside more 'dry' and 'clipped' reports of fact and context. In other words, emotion is construed aesthetically, as form, separate from content-based objectivity. And the compartmentalization of objectivity and (individual) tone even extends to a typology of reporters: the 'objective' Simpson and the 'toned' Little and Keane. Emotion is considered secondary to factuality, but a necessary ingredient nevertheless for foreign reports, especially those relaying poignant, tragic human suffering. O'Kane and Fisk prefer to aspire to 'truth' rather than objectivity for the very reason that it opens up more agentive space for deployment of subjectivity working towards, not against, maybe enriching, a grander outside picture.

The key message of this chapter is that all respondents operate according to 'rules of the game', whether institutional or preferred. I now turn to another institutional rule of the game but also an uncanny contingent disruption of human journalistic convention, a disabling and enabling of emotional attachment and life narrative where the Other can burst into the routine practice of foreign correspondence.

²⁰ Pilger uses 'tone' to refer to political or propagandist bias. In his 2010 documentary, *The War You Don't See*, he uses the example of film footage shot by Israeli soldiers, then broadcast on ITV, as setting a 'tone'.

Chapter Five: Trauma

Chapter Four foregrounded three principal conceptual areas that foreign correspondents discuss and imagine when they talk about their practice of objectivity or truthfulness: history, unconscious emotion and outsider identity. It revealed a 'traumatic' rupture between national and foreign institutional agency, demonstrated through the subjective experiences of Easton, Little and Keane. Chapter Five will now look more closely at how the experience of trauma both witnessed and experienced by some foreign correspondents enriches the heuristic model mapped out so far.

5.1: Journalism and trauma

Is there a politics of reporting trauma? According to Fassin and Rechtman:

'... trauma today is more a feature of the moral landscape serving to identify legitimate victims than it is a diagnostic category which at most reinforces that legitimacy. It speaks of the painful link that connects the present to the past. It identifies complaints as justified and causes as just. Ultimately, it defines the empirical way in which contemporary societies problematize the meaning of their moral responsibility in relation to the distress of the world'. (2009: 284)

Chapter Four also explored the research sample's understanding of objectivity, revealing a tension between those practitioners who admit no conflict of interest between their own 'inner' perception and 'outer' historical, 'objective' events and those who admit more intersubjective, interpretative, culturally partial, subjective and emotional space or agency between their 'inner' perception and 'outer' reality. 'Inner' is my term. The politically regressive experience of trauma, especially for certain institutional journalists, exposes a dangerous tension between subjective well-being and demanding institutional rules, rules that may cause

regression to a formative state of human development. It exposes the tension between individual self-care and a regressive political tendency in institutions to make impossible political economic demands on their human agents. In the context of foreign correspondence, the suffering, traumatized Other, the people in the foreign correspondents' sights and lenses, are often in a state of political regression and dreadful vulnerability as a result of national crisis, natural disaster, civil war or state violence. This makes the people in foreign correspondents' reports doubly vulnerable, so vulnerable that they sometimes actively invite the intrusion of powerful foreign outsiders whom they hope will carry the message of their plight to the outside world. I will return to this point in the Conclusion.

As a journalistic discourse, trauma is replete with notions of emotion and agency. Some recent trauma theory 'wants to bear witness to authentic forms of testimony that directly transmit experience outside the codes and conventions of mainstream media' (Meek, 2010: 1), for example, by redeploying objectivity, through human bodily testament (Peters, 2009), a more embodied agency of feeling the story, which advocates a more personal, physical and proximal relationship with trauma.

According to Meek (2010), trauma also sheds light on ethical issues. He stresses the analysis of unconscious structures of political identities rather than identification with, or empathy for, the victim/survivor of trauma. This is supported by the institutional constitutions of foreign correspondent 'rules of the game' that highlight the need for unconscious emotional engagement. The discourse of identification/empathy, which will be mapped more forensically in the next chapter, is argued by him to be problematic because it 'may participate in structures of power and exclusion', while regarding itself as progressive and liberal. Such a tension exists in Lichter's work (1986) on foreign correspondents being insiders with outsider self-images, as well as the tension between Giddens' *reflexivity* (1991) and Lasch's *narcissism* (1979) from a more general sociological perspective.

Such a view is also supported by Fassin and Rechtman (2009). This critique broadly corresponds with objective foreign correspondence and its forms of witnessing vis-à-vis political modes, and will be applied in the next chapter to discuss and evaluate the agency of compassion. Meek favours the former 'unconscious' discourse because it reveals repressed violence to be the basis of

both individual and group identity. For me, a theoretical frame that incorporates the 'unconscious' and 'compassion' models of trauma is complex agency. Such a theoretical frame problematizes the association of emotion with subjectivity (Terada, 2003: Benjamin, 1988).

Counter to mainstream trauma theory, theorists such as Allen Meek claim:

'Mediated trauma does not so much carry the traces of the traumatic past as dramatize and act out a crisis of subjective agency'. (2009: 13)

He argues against the 'compassion' model above, against the notion of a literal trace of an external reality and the testimony of a traumatized subject as a living embodiment of historical truth. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary* (2005), trauma is 'a deeply distressing or disturbing experience; emotional shock following a stressful event or a physical injury, that may lead to long-term neurosis'. In 1980, the American classificatory system of disease admitted the term 'post-traumatic stress disorder' (the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual*, 3rd edition). This can be attributed to the number of Vietnam veterans who had been experiencing similar symptoms. Historically speaking, however, it is arguably a symptom that was recorded as far back as the Trojan War (Shay, 1995).

The liberal discourse of trauma regards trauma as an intrusion on the self, an unwelcome intruder that will not settle down and will not go away. It is often regarded as an interruption of the 'outside' on the 'inside'. But, as Meek argues, traumatic intrusion can be a cultural phenomenon as much as an individual one.

I am interested in trauma because it is an emotional experience sometimes experienced, sometimes witnessed by foreign correspondents, sometimes both, that disrupts the boundary between witnessing and reporting conflict as well as the boundary between individual and culture (Alexander et al., 2004) and therefore raises important issues in the reporting of conflict. It is a human intrusion that some argue should not be reported and can have serious implications journalists' work and mental health. One of the symptoms of PTSD is avoidance of circumstances resembling or associated with the stressful traumatic event, clearly a potential interference in a foreign correspondent's work.

There has been some historical resistance to the genuineness of PTSD, as there has been to therapy culture, in general. Some physicians and psychiatrists have claimed that it is not a real condition, or at least it is a condition that can be attributed to unstable personalities, who have been prone to ‘traumatic’ emotional experience from a young, formative age. This is an argument taken up by some of the interviewees in my research, that some of them were traumatized individuals long before they started reporting conflict and trauma (see Chapter Seven).

Caruth (1995) suggests that traumatic symptoms ‘tell us of a reality or truth that is not otherwise available’; a different kind of objectivity, maybe. Is this the ‘feel of truth’ lacking in objective reporting, according to Peters and Carey?

Kaplan (2008: 4) notes that trauma research takes little account of how ‘one’s degree of proximity to the event affects its impact’. This connects with the institutional rule of the game of proper distance. Kaplan develops a five-step theory:

- (i) direct experience of trauma (trauma victim)
- (ii) relative or close friend of trauma victim
- (iii) direct observation by a bystander of another’s trauma
- (iv) clinician hearing a patient’s trauma narrative
- (v) visually and verbally related trauma

This echoes Peters’ schema of media witnessing *in*, *by* and *through* the media where witnessing *in* appears to correspond with Kaplan’s (i) and (ii), *by* corresponds to (iii) and *through* to (v). It also suggests that objective distance is the least traumatic vantage point for foreign reporting. I will test such a proposition below.

This all suggests that proximity to traumatized people and traumatic events does affect the emotional output of foreign correspondents. Maybe the complex need for impactful reporting of immediate trauma as well as more forensic time-consuming analysis necessarily puts an inhuman demand on individual practitioners because such a requirement exceeds the capacity of a single human being. The next section will investigate how foreign correspondents talk about their management of trauma.

I asked all the interviewees if they had experienced moments where the routine 'mask' of journalism had slipped due to a traumatic situation and provided four examples of BBC journalists who had experienced trauma (interview question 4). Brayne argues that foreign correspondence became more traumatic in Bosnia, as it was the first war that occurred after the end of the Cold War:

The emotional template was one of stasis [during the Cold War]. After '89, journalists had to find their own meaning. The Bosnian war shook the foundations of journalism.

He goes on to explain:

The politicians were putting on the story. They [journalists] discovered that this was wrong, this was bad, this was evil.

This opinion is also broadly shared by Bell, Bowen, Little and Keane. What seems to be at stake here is a traumatic sense that journalists, these four BBC institutional ones in particular (Brayne did not work in Bosnia), instead of having a kind of objective cushion to view world events from a safe distance, had become targets because they were now seen as players in information war and propaganda, more part of the stories they were writing than they had been accustomed to. Put a different way, Western institutional journalists had lost control of the mythic, triumphal narrative. The historical narrative had become closer and, therefore, more traumatic. This new era of international journalism extends right up to the present moment, coinciding with the narrative of 'The War Against Terror', from the former Yugoslavia, to Chechnya, Al-Qaida bombings from Bali to Madrid, 9/11, Somalia, Sudan, Afghanistan, Iraq, Lebanon to the popular uprisings in Tunisia, Egypt, Bahrain, Yemen, Syria and Libya. This is how Robertson framed it:

You can be very specific about why Western journalists are under threat in Iraq, because of Islamic fundamentalism, and they see us as quite simply

Western ... as part of the problem, and we're legitimate targets, and beyond that, this is a propaganda war.

The way Bowen managed Bosnia is poignantly recounted in the following incident:

I can think of a couple of times when I've been really angered about things. I can give you two examples, both in Yugoslavia. There's one which I mention in my book in Sarajevo, a funeral. I had gone to Sarajevo. It was my first visit and I was being drawn into the whole rights and wrongs of the struggle in many ways. I would then have to fight a mental battle in my reporting to try to keep it impartial. I wanted to do a piece to camera saying, 'This is an absolutely outrageous war crime, blah, blah. And then I just thought, no, I'm not going to do that because it's far better if I just lay out what happened and people can make their own minds up.

Clearly here, Bowen experienced a traumatic moment that permeated his internalized 'rules of the game'. His instinct was to be outraged and angry. But he still managed to override the moment. The second example:

When I was covering the Middle East, I was diverted to do the Kosovo story in 1999. It was after the bombing had started. I went to Montenegro and then to Albania where people were flooding out with tales. I did a rather angry piece to camera in which I slightly overstepped the mark, saying, 'We've been looking at this now for eight, nine years. When is it going to stop?' That was more or less the message. It was more subtly phrased than that. But I slightly regretted doing it. I felt that it was marginal.

I would like to underline two points that come out of Bowen's experience: firstly, the personal historical layers of emotion that occurred for him. The first wave of emotion is relatively raw instinctual anger, then an overlay of professional impartiality which represses the initial affect, and, finally, a more reflective emotional disclosure in his autobiography, years after the original events (see

Chapter Seven). The second point is the fact that trauma does not make rational sense at the time and it is only with time and work on it, with process, that there is a more dialectic understanding between self and the Other of what trauma is. And, in this case, as Brayne and Keane argue, this was historical and cultural trauma played out through the whole network of foreign correspondents working in the former Yugoslavia.

The most traumatic event for Bowen was not Bosnia or Kosovo, but the Middle East, as a result of the sudden death of his colleague and friend, Abed Takkoush. This was a personal interruption in his everyday trauma management, a point highlighted by him in his documentary and autobiography (see Chapter Seven):

What makes it different is when it's personal. For me, that was because I had a stake in his death. So that's what became personal. That was the only time I had post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms afterwards and I had never had them. I've seen many things.

Most of the research respondents, regardless of being men or women, took a relatively macho line to research questions I posed to them about trauma. Jon Snow provided, perhaps, the most vigorous response. In his view, journalists who talk about their own trauma '*need their bottoms wiped*'. He also made the following comment about Keane:

He's a victim of his own burn-out. I mean it's nothing to do with war reporting, it has to do with father fixation and all that.

There may be more to Snow's observation of Keane here than meets the eye. In both Keane's and Snow's autobiographies, there is good evidence that they both suffered from difficult, complex relationships with their fathers. I will return to this point in Chapter Seven. When I asked Robert Fisk how he dealt with other people's emotional trauma, he responded:

When you say 'deal with it', that has all my hackles up. Well, you know we've got to get rid of words like, in my view, 'deal with', 'cope with' ... I'm a journalist. My job is to tell the story.

Quite rightly, Fisk is making an important observation here on the politics of language. Fisk's statement clearly echoes Snow's in its ethical position on 'their' and 'our' suffering. It also expresses a negative position on the 'language' of therapy culture, which I will pick up on below when I discuss the Dart Centre for Journalism and Trauma.

Anthony Loyd felt he had never been affected by trauma:

No. I don't think that's ever occurred. I mean there have been all kinds of situations where I've thought, I wish I wasn't in this situation ... shooting or punching or something like that.

John Pilger also felt that he had never really suffered trauma:

Yes, it's taken a while to recover from a few things. But I've been fortunate. I have, at least, then in the short term recovered from them. But I've also been fortunate – I've never been seriously injured. Whereas if you take people like Martin Bell and John Simpson, both of them have suffered serious injuries that have taken a long time to recover from. That's real trauma. I've never suffered anything like that, so I don't have that experience. They're the people who could talk about it.

It is noteworthy that Pilger talks here more about physical trauma and injury rather than psychological. However, when it came to discussion of trauma in general, Pilger was more willing to accept that it was a real phenomenon and a problem:

I think it's much more dangerous for journalists in wars now than it ever was. Journalists are not protected. They used to have a certain protection,

not always but they could claim a kind of neutral status. Now journalists are often targets. So, it's certainly more dangerous in that regard. Now that would definitely make journalists more traumatized. Whereas generally whether journalists are more traumatized, I doubt very much because what there is now is a whole industry, a paraphernalia of emotion management or fear management. I've always refused to have anything to do with it personally, probably unwisely. It may have helped.

For Pilger, commercialization corrupts even 'emotion management', which is why he believes in emotion management at the level of the independent individual. The suggested contemporary historical passing of journalists' ability to claim neutrality, of course, may have something to do with the decline of objectivity in news production, a state of affairs in which Pilger claims he is in favour.

Maggie O'Kane accepts the power of trauma but also believes, presumably on an individual basis, that she has some control over how much she lets it affect her. Like Snow, Fisk and Pilger, she is quite unequivocal about the relative political and moral polarities between someone who has suffered deep loss and someone who has a professional journalistic engagement with that person:

I don't have a problem talking about trauma. I just think that, actually, we decide, how we deal with something that has desperately and deeply affected us. I mean, the most moving thing that ever happened to me was interviewing a woman who had lost all her children in Bosnia. And just after that I had a miscarriage and the foetus was three months old. Now, my response to that was hugely affected by my experience of talking to this woman. And subsequently to that ... I think we all make decisions about how we deal with other people's trauma, and actually it can fuck your head or it can't. You can actually make a decision about how much you want it to fuck your head. And I've got a theory about this ... almost how dare we? Kidnap their pain? And foreign correspondents in Sarajevo talking about how they're traumatized? I just think they can get on a plane any time. So, I just feel we're not allowed to be part of that club. Not we, I make a decision

for me, which is about my own background, my own vision, and other people have different ways of how they deal with it.

This assertion by O’Kane is manifestly an appeal to compassion, a discussion that will be probed in Chapter Six. Fergal Keane and John Simpson, like O’Kane, are more open to the notion of being affected by trauma, but have had significantly different experiences of it. Fergal Keane stands out in his candid recognition that not only is he vulnerable to trauma but was so even before he reported conflict and trauma:

The issue for me is ... ok, I’ll speak for myself, I was a traumatized human being long before I ever got to war zones.

Do I think I’m a better journalist now than I was when I was unaware, if you like, of trauma, whether caused by childhood or war? I would say ‘yes’. I would definitely say ‘yes’. And yet I know that the sort of genocide I did in South Africa, during the transition period for Radio 4, my reporting of the Rwandan genocide, I doubt I’ll ever equal it in terms of its vividness and power. I very much doubt it.

What is interesting is that Fergal Keane and John Simpson both reported the genocide in Rwanda in 1994 but, seemingly had different experiences of trauma, as well as different ways of managing it. I asked Simpson if he had experienced trauma:

Again, I think it’s perhaps the mellowing with age a bit, but it seems to me the human issues are actually more important than whether you get fifteen seconds of video material out of this for a report or not. I don’t want to be that intrusive. I think we all feel that. I don’t think there’s anybody who’s such an automaton that he or she would ignore what’s going on. Having said that, people do often tell you what’s happened because they want some kind of result out of it, they want someone arrested, somebody blamed. They want the truth to come out. You are not necessarily doing

someone a favour by not asking them what they are doing. I just think there are times when you can't force yourself to impose on people. You've just got to tiptoe away, I think.

This reflexive disclosure reveals a tension between temporal constraint and emotional attachment or compassion. Simpson here demonstrates a degree of sensitivity to trauma, his own as well as Rwandans', that could not be described as macho. He seems to display an experiential awareness of how far he should go, what is intrusive, and the danger of crossing a line that would lead to what he would call 'manipulative' journalism:

I think I've always felt like it. I remember back in Ireland in the early 70s, you'd go to a house that's just been bombed, you don't want to pester people, you know, when they're at their lowest. You don't want to use them so that you'll get people crying on camera, which can be a bit of a give-away.

Allan Little, out of all the interviewees, was the most positive about a perceived professional need to address the generally macho nature of reporting conflict and trauma. He has also presented a BBC *Panorama* documentary on the 'trauma industry'. I asked him if he had the sense that there is still in the BBC a culture of people not really wanting to talk about trauma very much:

Yes, that's still there. It's private. It's back to the private/public. We have a responsibility to others. Some people aren't affected by this sort of thing at all. They just don't get it. And some of them can be as emotional as anybody else. And other people who have suffered from this, friends of mine who have suffered from this, when you see them on television, you'd think they were the driest, least emotional of all reporters. So, having an experience, having suffered a post-traumatic condition is not connected to whether you use emotion or not in your reporting.

This is a very important point, the complication of the causal relationship between journalistic traumatic experience and deploying the experience in a more heightened emotional way.

Little refers to a scientific study of foreign correspondents by Dr Anthony Feinstein (*Journalists Under Fire: the Psychological Hazards of Covering War*, 2006) that documents journalistic experience of trauma:

One of the great things about this book is that he approaches it with scientific method. He's a psychiatrist. He's done an epidemiological study with a control group and his conclusion, his statistical conclusions are pretty eloquent. Now we have a choice. We can ignore it or we can talk about it, think about it. And I prefer talking about it and thinking about it. Ask Lindsay about this and she's very dismissive of it. She says it's nonsense, it's self indulgent. We don't have to be there. We go of our own accord and the people who are trapped in those places aren't there of their own accord. So it's silly and self indulgent. I disagree with Lindsay about that because I have watched some of my colleagues suffer from this. So, I think it's good to be aware. Hemingway blew his brains out. Hemingway got so drunk in later life that he couldn't write any more. I mean, come on!

There is a clear tension here between Hilsum's self-censoring of narcissism, an institutional rule of the game, and Little's narcissistic agency which derives from real traumatic life experience. Note Little's validation of the Feinstein book as scientific, a discourse that compliments his BBC objective stance. He refers to Lindsey Hilsum's more macho approach as well as that of Philip Knightley in Feinstein's book. Hilsum's attitude, when she was interviewed, was as follows:

I so stubbornly refuse to be traumatized because everyone thinks I should be traumatized by now.

I then asked her if that meant that she is never traumatized:

I am. Of course I am. But it's normal, isn't it? I mean, for fuck's sake! You don't see wars and genocides and things without getting upset. If you don't get upset, you're not a human being. That's just the human experience. We choose to do this. It's not thrust upon us. It's entirely of our own free will. And then everybody has their own coping mechanisms. There you go. That's the way it is.

Hilsum was the only Western journalist actually living in Rwanda at the time of the genocide. Her coping strategy was twofold: professional and personal.

Professionally:

I had a purpose. I had to get the story out. I think that what I had to do because I am a journalist is what kept me going.

Personally:

So what I did, for quite a lot of that time, the first few days, I couldn't leave the house. I redesigned my kitchen. I sat inside my house in Rwanda and I thought, I'm going to get out of this alive. And when I get home, I'm going to have a new kitchen and I drew little diagrams of where the fridge and everything was going to go. So, that's only because I am a shallow person. But everybody has their own way of coping with things and that was the way I coped.

Hilsum was able to recognize a traumatic situation and to separate herself from the trauma professionally and personally. She refused to allow herself to give in to the immediate emotion, horror, of other people killing each other. In my interview with her, she underscored her self-reliance, her freedom from institutional constraints of ITN/Channel Four News and the Dart Centre:

I've never felt any pressure from any organization. The only pressure is from myself because I want to do things.

Hilsum had another comparable traumatic experience reporting the school massacre in Beslan in 2004. This is how she addressed it in my interview with her:

It was absolutely horrific. The football field outside Beslan was where 300 families were burying their children. And it rained and rained. It didn't stop raining. I have never known nature to be so in accord with what was going on. There were a lot of journalists and I just felt uncomfortable intruding into people's grief that way, even though they almost didn't seem to notice we were there because they were so taken up by their grief. There were journalists almost falling into the graves and there were journalists doing pieces to camera while funerals were going on, doing pieces to camera. And I just felt it was wrong. Everybody makes those judgements. Other journalists did those pieces to camera and maybe that was alright. I personally couldn't do it.

For Hilsum, choice is a key issue. Foreign correspondents choose to report war and conflict whereas people who caught up in it, the victims rather than the victimizers, do not. I asked her what her opinion was of the foreign correspondents who are coming forward and talking about their trauma, examples of which I had mentioned at the beginning of the interview:

It's very fashionable: 'I've become deeply traumatized'. I feel a terrible amount of pressure for not being traumatized because I'm the official hard-hearted old cow of a particular journalistic fraternity and all of whom you've interviewed. I am the holder. I am the one who has a hard time accepting the idea that we're all supposed to be traumatized.

At a Frontline Club event (25th May 2010), Hilsum put forward Martha Gellhorn as one of her mentors or celebrated role-models for foreign correspondence. Given that Hilsum apparently decries Pilger's political kind of journalism and that Pilger also admires Gelhorn's work for its rejection of

‘telescopic’ objectivity, I asked Hilsum what she thought of this coincidence. Her reply was a shrug of the shoulders and a resourceful literary resort to Walt Whitman: ‘I contain multiplicities’. I found that this interchange provided useful insight into journalism-as-practice and journalism-as-theory. There is undoubtedly a powerful difference between claiming internal conflict in a semi-formal group discussion and performing it in a Channel Four News report. Also, this self-reflexive remark seems to be a ‘return’ to objective agency whereby the self tries to totally contain the Other and all Otherness.

In my view, there is a growing awareness of multiple approaches to journalism but less application of multiplicity. And Hilsum’s ‘hard-heartedness’, her words and self-parody, arguably macho, approach to trauma and vulnerability is by no means exceptional. Having had insufficient time to ask Hilsum all the research questions that I wanted to when she was in Beijing, I extended the interview by asking her one or two more questions by e-mail. What was really interesting about the answers she gave me was that they shed new light in her so-called hard-heartedness, as well as attitude to trauma:

I am not addicted to war, nor have I been seduced by it. Of course, I have experienced the high which comes from adrenalin, and that’s very intense when you feel you are living on the edge, or you’re surviving against the odds. But I find that, on the whole, danger makes me very deliberate and calm. Liking war is a terrible, distorting thing. Thinking that it is the only thing that matters is distorting, too – that’s why I’m in China. I had grown to believe that the only important thing was people killing each other. This is not true. While we’re obsessed with the violence of the Middle East, China is changing the world in different ways, through growing economic and diplomatic power. It is a huge historical shift, as important or potentially more important than the impact of civil war in Iraq. This kind of intellectual analysis is an important corrective in an era of obsession with more emotional stories.

This candid disclosure, in my view, admits that there is a rule of the game in Hilsum’s ‘journalistic fraternity’ that fetishizes what she calls ‘emotional stories’.

She maintains that danger makes her 'very deliberate and calm' rather than traumatized. She also associates war reporting, especially in the Middle East, with obsessive emotional stories. This is significant in light of the fact that Bowen and Fisk specialize in reporting the Middle East. Hilsum, like Simpson, Little and Snow, is very guarded about being asked about her emotional self. Something about the indirect medium of e-mail enabled a more reflective message.

A point I expand in Chapter Seven, *pace* Gilmore (2001: 7), is that a desire to deny trauma can also be a desire to deny self, especially autobiographical self, because that is interpreted as inimical to objectivity and truth:

'Because testimonial projects require subjects to confess, to bear witness, to make public and shareable a private and intolerable pain, they enter into a legalistic framework in which their efforts can move quickly beyond their interpretation and control, become exposed as ambiguous, and therefore subject to judgements about their veracity and worth ... Although those who can tell their stories benefit from the therapeutic balm of words, the path to this achievement is strewn with obstacles. To navigate it, some writers move away from recognizably autobiographical forms even as they engage autobiography's central questions'.

This is by no means an attempt to psychoanalyze Hilsum but, rather, to tease out some rather subtle threads of discourse. It also seems pertinent that Hilsum, despite being relatively prominent, has desisted so far from writing an autobiographical book. She has just published a book on the recent Libyan Revolution. As for Little, there is a sense that autobiographical work might damage a well-earned reputation for reliable, objective foreign correspondence.

While some journalists reject trauma, others are trying to tackle it either individually or through institutions like the Dart Centre for Journalism and Trauma. Maybe, relatively independent press journalists such as Fisk, Pilger and O'Kane can conduct his or her own emotional self-management more effectively than TV institutional ones. Maybe the process of writing allows a different therapeutic engagement of self that mitigates trauma and releases repressed bodily affect. After all, the European arm of the Dart Centre for Journalism and Trauma was

formerly directed by an ex-BBC foreign correspondent whose work ended up documenting and discussing mainly TV institutional journalistic examples of trauma, especially BBC ones. As stated above, the press journalists interviewed for this research are much more reserved and dismissive of the Dart Centre's institutional aims than their TV counterparts.

5.2: Witnessing

The use of emotion in reporting conflict and trauma involves witnessing. It necessitates foreign correspondents 'being there' to witness important events with their own eyes and other senses, to observe, breathe, listen, even smell, touch or taste in a figurative sense, to feel. They then relate or transcribe their experiences to screen or page, to articulate a first draft of history. In the new media era, some directly convey their bodily testimonies. Conceptually, witnessing involves several stages of mediation. The first stage comprises visual and auditory perception of what the witness sees and hears happening around him or her, including what people in the vicinity are saying as well as what they are doing; this entails looking outwards, focusing on the external. The second stage involves some kind of emotional mapping and cognitive mental processing of what a journalist has just witnessed, maybe a slightly more internally deliberated review of what has been witnessed to transpose it into a familiar narrative form using journalistic conventions and assumptions that predate the experience of what has been happening. Thirdly, the information is then re-witnessed, is performed through the journalistic voice, in front of a television camera or on the printed page, again translated through intra-professionally agreed journalistic 'rules of the game', performative techniques and routine strategies. This is very much a heuristic model that attempts to sketch out how time is involved as well as emotion in the journalistic process of witnessing. In the next section, I will unpack the conceptual arguments around witnessing and mediation using mainly the arguments of Frosh, Peters, Pinchevski, Seaton, Ellis and Sontag. I will explore how my journalists themselves think about the relationship between institutional 'rules of the game' such as objectivity, trauma and witnessing.

If journalism is the rough draft of history, then surely witnessing of history is a crucial part of producing such a draft. Frosh and Pinchevski's definition of media witnessing is as follows:

'It refers simultaneously to the appearance of witnesses in media reports, the possibility of media themselves bearing witness, and the positioning of media audiences as witnesses to depicted events, configurations that are amenable to handy summary through a tripartite distinction (with apologies to Abraham Lincoln) between witnesses *in* the media, witnessing *by* the media, and witnessing *through* the media'. (Frosh and Pinchevski, 2009: 1)

Frosh (2009: 69) takes the view that:

'Media witnessing thus helps to maintain that unexciting but essential sphere of indifferent relations to strangers in which potential feelings of hostility are neutralized without requiring that individuals become personally acquainted or committed'.

This proposition, this rule, does not contradict the institutional 'rules of the game' of objectivity, impartiality, centring, visual impact, proper distance or reflexivity. Note he makes the case for 'unexciting' media witnessing that seems to denote sober, or at least toned down or repressed emotion, what he calls 'indifferent relations'. Frosh revalidates the distance between journalist and Other as a necessary ethical component of a healthy, cosmopolitan, universal society by regarding intimate human relations as more problematic, conflictual and maybe even traumatic; what he calls the 'exclusiveness of intimacy'. He calls it 'civil inattention'. Civil inattention was first coined by Goffman (1963: 84) as a kind of unhostile, guarded social distance between strangers in modern societies, epitomized by the behaviour of passengers on public transport, for example. Frosh describes this as:

‘... the third-person qualities of contemporary witnessing, and the for-anyone-as-someone nature of broadcasting, ... the phenomena of “civil attention” and stranger sociality within modern societies’. (2009: 66)

This urban modern phenomenon of ‘anomie’, anonymity, fits Bauman’s model of the stranger in a ‘foreign’ conflict. It is the rule of the game of detachment and non-involvement.

This kind of ‘media witnessing’ places such a distance between media readers and viewers, journalistic agency and the subjects of the journalistic agency, the ‘others’, that there is the least possible intrusion of conflicting personal and political views, which then opens the way for a single, powerful ‘objective’ perspective or discourse. The problem with this may be that it ‘neutralizes’ the social space between bystanders, foreign correspondents and readers/viewers at the expense of the people who are themselves involved in conflict and trauma. In psychoanalytic terms, this is a kind of displacement. Displacement, according to Laplanche and Pontalis, is:

‘The fact that an idea’s emphasis, interest or intensity is liable to be detached from it and to pass on to other ideas, which were originally of little intensity but which are related to the first idea by a chain of associations’. (1983: 121)

The traumatized ‘others’ in the story become neutralized or displaced on to the ideas of objectivity and the centred audience.

This ‘civil inattention’ may resemble an infotainment model for the relationship between viewers and text, a kind of temporary vicarious engagement, a suspension of disbelief, but ultimately one that can be controlled and switched off at will, ‘without requiring that individuals become personally acquainted or committed’ (Frosh, 2009: 69). This puts the suffering others of the report into a kind of apartheid or quarantine, segregated, powerless to intrude into ‘cosmopolitan, universal’, Western society. Boltanski (1999) sees a difference between the ‘affective dimension’ of emotional style and opinion. He argues that ‘distant suffering’ reporting disallows opinion in the interest of knowledge and objectivity,

but allows an 'affective dimension' in which the reporter plays a dual role of reporter and spectator. S/he reports both on what the spectator sees and the spectator's impressions faced with what s/he sees; on how s/he is affected by it. This seems to be an ideal theoretical conflation of immediate (emotionally and temporally), subjective sensory reporting and distant 'objective' media witnessing, what I would call complex agency.

Frosh's theory is turned on its head by a proposition by Oonora O'Neil (cited in Seaton, 2005: 282):

'[She] has suggested that "seeing misery at a distance may lessen the anguish but can easily produce confusion rather than clarity. At a distance views multiply"'.

When O'Neil talks about lessening the anguish, does she mean the anguish, the trauma, for the reporter or for the viewers? I assume that she means journalistic anguish, that such anguish could actually be a positive conduit for empathic, intersubjective understanding of the suffering people rather than a negative, emotional, personal intrusion. 'At a distance views multiply' means that, at a distance, views become more about political agendas of the journalists and the values they espouse than the ongoing suffering people.

However, Seaton also goes on to refute the point that 'closeness per se produces understanding'. What does she mean by 'understanding'? I posit that she means a kind of emotional understanding, as opposed to a more distant, intellectual one. What she seems to be saying is that 'close' media witnessing is no more likely to lead to some kind of moral and emotional convergence between the journalistic witness and the people caught up in the event than 'at a distance'. This potential contradictory formulation of spatial mediating supports the idea of a proper distance for the journalist, as outlined in Chapter Two by Silverstone and Chouliaraki; not too close and not too far. Clearly, a single journalist cannot be in two places at once, but news agency is a collective, technological endeavour that should be able to provide frontline reporting as well as political context. Seaton states:

‘While being “close” to the front line may tell you things you need to know, it may not unfortunately, always mean being ‘close’ to the important things that are happening’. (2005: 282)

This qualification underlines the ethical complexity of making simple value judgements about closeness and distance. For example, who should make the ethical judgements, the journalist or the viewer? Is the role of the journalist to act as his/her own eyes, the eyes of the individual viewer, the eyes of the imagined nation or the eyes of the global viewer? She is alluding to the constraint of individual journalistic agency, the value of a mix of closeness and distance, again a more intersubjective, maybe less individualistic approach to the reporting of conflict and trauma. John Simpson endorses a ‘range of voices’, from the sympathetic to the indifferent, in reports of conflict and trauma:

But there’s not just room for one type of tone, as it were. If we all had the same tone, it would be really quite a depressing kind of business. We would all be either deeply sympathetic or else we would all be clipped and dry and unsympathetic. I just think you have to have a range of voices. I think we tend to use Fergal [Keane] for those kind of ... you don’t send him to an EU summit, you know, because it would be a waste. What you do is send him to complex places that people need to respond to viscerally rather than just intellectually.

Frosh’s prescription for media witnessing as indifferent civil inattention seems to fit quite well with Simpson’s and Little’s prescription and the BBC objective model as a whole through its being an ethical, universal, good bias. Where it does not fit is witnessing of more horrific events that demand, in Simpson’s words, an extra emotional dimension, maybe a compression of the conventional distance between atrocity and viewer. Simpson retrospectively, reflexively and ‘autobiographically’, critiques his own reporting of a relatively horrific event, namely the 1989 Tianenmen Square, Beijing massacre as an example of his work that required a certain degree of emotion:

I felt, when I looked at that, that it wasn't enough to be just factual. It wasn't enough just to say, at 8.15 the soldiers came in, they fired fifty rounds, you know, thirty people died then, a little bit later ... That just didn't give any sense of the horror of what both this other correspondent and I watched.

Simpson claims that certain more shocking events force him to have an emotional reaction which should be legitimately relayed in his report of the said events. So, there seems to be a certain amount of compartmentalization in his agency here between two broad kinds of events, shocking ones and more mundane ones. The former category for him necessarily demands a more ethical, emotional approach. When I asked him if there had been other occasions that he had reported on, that had been shocking or traumatic, he answered:

Oh, yes, yes. Lots, lots of different times. In Kigali, for instance, in Rwanda, I just remember going into a place where there had been some dreadful massacre. The survivors were hanging around, women were weeping, and I thought, 'yes, I suppose I ought to be filming and interviewing them'. I just couldn't face it. It just seemed grotesque to go and kick your way in, ask them how old they were, where they lived and what had happened. We just filmed from the door and the window. I just said, 'let's get out if here'. I think the cameraman was quite glad to do that. And that's happened to me in various places.

Apart from Beijing and Kigali, Simpson was not more specific about what these 'various places' were. I will come back to examine and discuss other journalistic disclosures of trauma below. But here again we see his professional journalistic tendency to step back from the witnessed horror, the trauma, rather than to immerse himself in it so as to relay to BBC viewers. Of course, he is clearly aware of this personal and professional constraint, which seems to be why he holds Fergal Keane's different approach in such high regard, as a style that he has even started to try to emulate.

Probably the single, most traumatic, life-threatening moment in Bowen's career was when his driver and friend, Abed Takkoush, was killed on the Israel-

Lebanon border in 2000. When he filed his story that day, he was in two minds whether to mention the death of his friend:

The piece I did on the day that he was killed, I thought, shall I even mention the fact that he was killed? And I did at the end. 'And also today while we filming, blah blah'. I thought that was very important. The story is not us. Abed was Lebanese but he was working for the BBC and he was not the only person killed that day. The story is south Lebanon, Israelis leaving. We actually had some good material up until the point that he was killed. And the material wasn't in the car. It was on one tape. It was in the camera that he had taken out. So, my piece that day did kick off with Abed. It ended with it. And you know the video in On the Frontline documentary, that was the first time in a documentary that the video was exposed publicly. And, I thought, what the hell, we're doing a piece about this, we might as well show it. This is the right context, the right forum, and it does give people an idea of what we do and I do feel that as journalists we impose. We are very intrusive in what we do and we impose a lot on people in terms of privacy, violating their privacy. So, if I want to talk about reporting and being a reporter, in a way, I have to violate my own privacy. Otherwise, it's not an honest piece of work. So that's the sort of rationale that I had. But at the time we didn't use it, because I thought at the time it felt wrong to do it.

This is an example of complex agency, the careful 'calibration' of emotion, even trauma, in a news report in favour of impartial context, a central institutional rule of the game. What is interesting is that, despite Bowen's prudence about the news report that day, he has subsequently made a documentary and written an autobiography that talk about the incident, the documentary especially.

The Frosh/Simpson/Little prescription for witnessing is at odds with someone like Pilger whose view is that civil inattention is a Western cultural means of censoring the Other in the sense of the political Other. Pilger's position on witnessing is markedly different from Simpson's position which regards Pilger's practice as 'campaigning' journalism, designed to politically 'manipulate' the audience. With regard to media witnessing and civic inattention, Pilger regards this

as Western hegemony disguised as 'neutral' liberal universalism. He takes the opposite view on it, what you might call the exclusiveness of objectivity. Here is a binary opposition that seems to articulate through a lot of the research and media analytical material. The theoretical literature suggests that civil inattention is a Western cultural means of not listening to the Other, of anaesthetizing knowledge (Morley, 2005), of de-ethicalizing the Other (Bauman, 1999), of racism (Žižek²¹), effectively of alienating, 'thinning' or 'flattening' the Other (maybe even squashing) in such a way that 'it' does not traumatically intrude into the journalist's and/or viewer's 'thick' personal and private relations. In the end, I think both positions have their relative ethical merits.

Peters advocates witnessing as a form of bodily religious testimony:

'Of four basic types of relations to an event, three can sustain the attitude of a witness. To be there, present at the event in space and time is the paradigm case. To be present in time but removed in space is the condition of liveness, simultaneity across space. To be present in space but removed in time is the condition of historical representation: here is the possibility of a simultaneity across time, a witness that laps the ages. To be absent in both space and time but still have access to an event via its traces is the condition of recording: the profane zone in which the attitude of witnessing is hardest to sustain'. (in Frosh and Pinchevski (eds), 2009: 38)

For Peters, witnessing is powerfully affected by both time and space. Proximal temporal and spatial witnessing is deemed the most truthful testimony, carrying the weight of religious faith. On the other end of the theoretical scale, the viewer is, at best, a 'profane' witness, too separate from the event in space and time. This seems to be the difference between presence and absence. And the foreign correspondent is between presence and absence. It behoves the journalist to constitute him/herself as close as possible to the objects of witnessing in order for the audience to recognize truth written on the human body.

²¹ This comment was made in reply to a question I put to Slavoj Žižek at a paper he presented at Birkbeck College, 20th June 2008.

Peters further delineates three interconnected dynamic processes of media witnessing: witnessing *in* (my italics) the media (people directly involved in the news story), then *by* the media (journalists), and finally *through* the media (audiences/viewers), where audience witnessing becomes most mediated or diluted, and often simply fails. He criticizes objectivity for creating a 'veracity gap' (ibid.: 38), which chimes with Silverstone's and Chouliaraki's knowledge gap, to which I referred in Chapter Two.

'In the preference for the dumb witness lies a distant origin of both scientific and journalistic ideas of objectivity: the observer as a mirror, dull as the microscope to human concerns or consequences'. (ibid.: 33)

Note how this model operates against the grain of the objective model, which tends to collapse together the *by* and the *through* the media; the journalistic and audience agency. For Peters, the danger of objective witnessing is an imbalance towards looking to the audience more than the victims and sufferers of trauma, the centring rule of the game, a kind of looking away that makes the use of emotion of the objective journalist more false and performative, some say 'staged'.

I hope that I have demonstrated so far in this chapter that the theories of witnessing are rich and provocative. Unlike all the interviewees in the research group (except Pilger), Peters believes objective reporting lacks an important human emotional conduit to the journalistic subjects, a point already alluded to by Seaton:

'The objective witness claims disembodiment and passivity, a cold indifference to the story, offering "just the facts"'. (ibid.: 33)

And Carey makes a similar point:

'Eyewitness accounts have the feel of truth because they are quick, subjective and incomplete, unlike "objective" or reconstituted history, which is laborious but dead'. (Carey, 1987: xxx)

Simpson's conceptual model of emotion is a spatial one, one of either standing back or 'throwing oneself into things' when a 'dangerous' situation necessitates it:

I don't mean to say that you shouldn't at times just throw yourself into things because we've all done that and, when I've done it, I've always felt that that was the best response to dangerous situations, for instance, just to go and do it, not to think about, teeter on the edge all the time.

He seems to be saying here that 'dangerous' life-threatening, traumatic situations demand that you engage more instinctually because you have less time to think, less time to emotionally reflect on the story. The implication is that thinking takes time and 'dangerous' reporting means resorting to a more instinctual, maybe unconscious journalistic practice. This strategy seems to be a method of shielding Simpson's own emotions from the heightened emotions outside of himself, a coping strategy that regards dangerous situations as dangerous not only physically but also emotionally. Simpson's claim to be able to stand back and 'dive in' implies that he has more of a proclivity for the former, standing back.

What emerges from all of this is an important distinction between emotion that is 'objectively' grounded or anchored in the 'self' and emotion that accompanies opinion or bias that is understood to be more political and hermeneutic (Rosen, 1990). The notion of the hermeneutics of the self or subject will be taken up in Chapter Seven. For Simpson, there is a clear line between the two that demarcates the difference between emotional truth and emotional artifice; he associates the latter with manipulation. But for Peters and Carey, objective reporting lacks the 'feel of truth'. This recalls Boltanski's (1999) theoretical differentiation between the 'affective dimension' of emotional style and opinion and 'distant suffering' reporting, a contrived compromise between factual context and emotional truth.

5.3: The Dart Centre for Journalism and Trauma

The US Dart Center, as described on its own website, is:

‘a global network of journalists, journalism educators and health professionals dedicated to improving media coverage of trauma, conflict and tragedy. The Dart Center for Journalism and Trauma continues a mission begun in the 1990s. In 1991 [the] journalism faculty at Michigan State University established a small program to assist journalism students in reporting on victims of violence with sensitivity, dignity and respect, collaborating with the Michigan Victim Alliance and Frank Ochberg, M.D., a psychiatrist and pioneer in the treatment of traumatic stress’.²²

It used to be a project of the University of Washington, Department of Communication, now a project of Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism. Its core programme funding is provided by the Dart Foundation of Mason, Michigan.

Its mission statement is as follows. It:

‘Advocates ethical and thorough reporting of trauma; compassionate, professional treatment of victims and survivors by journalists; and greater awareness by media organizations of the impact of trauma coverage on both news professionals and news consumers.

Educates journalists and journalism students about the science and psychology of trauma and the implications for news coverage.

Provides a professional forum for journalists in all media to analyze issues, share knowledge and ideas, and advance strategies related to the craft of reporting on violence and tragedy.

Creates and sustains interdisciplinary collaboration and communication among news professionals, clinicians, academic researchers and others concerned with violence, conflict and tragedy’.²³

²² <http://dartcenter.org/history>; retrieved 16/01/10.

²³ <http://dartcenter.org/mission>; retrieved 16/01/10.

Note the first line of the mission statement's appeal for ethical reporting as 'compassionate'. The implication seems to be that there is a danger of reporting trauma unethically; in other words, exploiting others' trauma as an institutional rule of the game. This raises the question of whether, as Tester would have it, commercially-driven sensationalism is at odds with ethical reporting of trauma.

The Dart Center has conducted seminars, training and support programmes for journalists covering the attacks of September 11, 2001, Hurricane Katrina, the Boxing Day tsunami, the Troubles in Northern Ireland, the Iraq War, the Virginia Tech shootings and the Japanese tsunami (2011) and its aftermath, among other events. The experiences of these events form part of the respondent data for this thesis. The Dart Center's director is the American journalist Bruce Shapiro. Its affiliate, the Dart Centre in Europe, based in London and now directed by Gavin Rees, has developed programmes for the BBC (BBC Project for Journalism and Trauma, a comprehensive programme of trauma awareness, directed by Mark Brayne, October 2002 – September 2003) in the UK. Mark Brayne was director of the Dart Centre, Europe, from 2002 to 2008. He is a former BBC correspondent and is one of my interviewees.

One of my research questions (interview question 6) to all the interviewees asked if they had heard of the Dart Centre, what they understood its purpose to be, whether they had used it and whether they were broadly positive or negative about its aims. No single interviewee was particularly impressed with the work of the Dart Centre. The most positive responses came from Keane and O'Kane. O'Kane:

The idea that people can unburden. Mark Brayne has been to talk to us and I think it's very good what he's doing. It's a very healthy idea.

Keane was not without reservation:

What I'm very wary of is getting away from the roots of what makes us do what we do. You really need to understand why you are driven.

He makes two pertinent points. Firstly, that mental health is not a public but a personal issue:

I believe your mental well-being is fundamentally your own responsibility and I took that view about myself. Now they gave me, you know, time off to sort myself out. But it was my responsibility to do it at the end of the day. And the understanding I have of myself hasn't been given me by the BBC, or the Dart Centre or anyone else. It's been hard earned, you know.

Secondly, Keane states that his mental health issues, as mentioned above, predate his professional work:

I've gone through counselling myself but that wasn't really for post-traumatic stress disorder. It was for booze. I think more power to them [users of the Dart Centre]. I think there's one certain danger and it goes back to a question you asked earlier. I'm really interested, in whatever sphere I'm looking at, in motivation. What is it that makes people do the things they do? Whether it's the genocidal killing in Rwanda or it's the journalist who's reporting the genocidal killing in Rwanda. What strikes me as more interesting is why people with our backgrounds wash up in these places all the time. What is it we are trying to fix, trying to do? I don't think there's any one answer. There's a whole complex set of reasons. Do I suffer from PTSD? I don't think I do. I get very depressed moments when I go back to Rwanda. I wouldn't call that a kind of ongoing trauma.

Bowen was similarly reserved about the use of the Dart Centre:

Mark Brayne asked me to take part in a forum. The fact that I didn't accept the invitation was because I talked about it [emotional trauma] in my documentary [On the Frontline].

The fact that Bowen felt more comfortable addressing trauma in his own documentary than in the more public forum of the Dart Centre is significant. Despite his reservations about the Dart Centre, Bowen thinks 'it's very good that there's an awareness of emotional trauma'. Anthony Loyd makes a similar point about his mental predisposition prior to working as a foreign correspondent in war zones that leads him to a similarly reserved stance on the work of the Dart Centre:

I am a bit wary about it all. I don't know enough about it but obviously I know Mark Brayne and I know his efforts and everyone else's to publicize awareness of PTSD. I don't know exactly what Dart does, but one thing that I'm concerned of, and this might apply to Dart and it might not, because, as I say, I don't know all about them, but I do know from conversations with Mark, they want to try and bring out PTS. I don't think I've ever had PTS. No, I think I probably have but it's never really bothered me because I've always thought, it's not really that surprising if you go to a particularly horrible place, see really nasty things and are a bit frightened, then you're going to be a bit fucked up afterwards. Mine always drains away. I might have a few nightmares and be a bit moody but then it goes. And I never try to attribute my drug problems or anything like that to PTS. They have fitted hand in hand at times. The drug problem was there already. It moved side by side and at times it interlinked. But some people say, you ended up taking heroin because of the horrors of Bosnia. I say, 'no, I didn't'. I was doing it long before I went to Bosnia. What I am worried about in this society of increasing over management of risk and over sense of responsibility for other people's lives. Every time a journalist gets killed it's, 'give them new flack jackets and new helmets and send them on new survive a hostile environments courses. Oh dear, the insurance people won't like this and they won't like that'. More armoured cars and everything. If you combine that and limit journalists and get them to check in before they go out anywhere, and then you get too involved, I think it's a terrible risk of mental health from going to wars. It's going to translate to a place where journalists almost can't move at all.

Both Keane's and Loyd's point about having mental health issues before becoming professional journalists suggests that their professional work is a positive deployment of subjectivity, of past trauma, whose exposure maybe they feel is inappropriate to the Dart Centre setting and a potential group stigmatization. This is especially so for BBC journalists whose tribal, professional badge of honour is objectivity. They are understandably vulnerable about the idea of talking about formative emotional difficulties under the institutional umbrella of 'trauma'. Most of the interviewees prefer to participate in public events, to make personal disclosures, under their own control. This is where autobiography comes in for some of them.

Loyd goes into his personal history of drug abuse and background in his two autobiographical books (see Chapter Seven). So, one of his main reservations about the Dart Centre is the emerging institutional and legal culture of risk management (also mentioned by Pilger talking about trauma, in general), as he sees it, that will screen journalists from the stories that they are covering, that will stymie their movements. Loyd then expanded on the psychological toll of reporting conflict and trauma as well as the psychological type:

Most media institutions need war journalists. One of the big areas of ignorance in the institutions, and it's rather patronizing as well, they seem to somehow expect to be able to send individuals out to an area where another group of individuals are killing each other and suffering the most appalling damage and hurt, and be able to somehow send people out to witness that and record that, and have them come back at the end of the day in a safe way. And war is not like that. The arch dynamic of war is chaos. War doesn't work like that. And you can get the most experienced journalist, the most cold-blooded journalist with the best kit who ends up getting a bullet slapped between his eyes just the same as the SAS lose people. So, I am a little bit wary, and it's also to say that the kind of person who embarks on wanting to be a war reporter is probably someone who might not be the most stable character to begin with. It's not to say they are mad or anything. You've got all sorts of other things, an interest in violence, and this intense competitiveness of the profession which imposes

huge psychological strains on individuals whether they are a home news journalist or a foreign correspondent.

Through this disclosure, Loyd offers another rule of the foreign correspondent game, that of 'competitiveness'. Moreover, he states that such a rule imposes 'huge psychological strain' on individuals.

The theme of mental health being a private, individual matter is one echoed by Simpson:

I don't like Centres. It's a bit like, if I were an alcoholic, I don't think I'd go to AA. I just think that's the last thing I'd do. I mean, it's a personal thing. It's not because of any kind of disapproval of anything. I just don't like groups very much.

At the same time, I'm all for the notion of therapy and people taking to one another about it all. I mean, it's how I coped with the thing that happened to us in 2003 when the Americans bombed us. We'd seen a lot of horrible sights and losing a friend, and being injured myself and all of my colleagues. Most of the people in my team went home but the producer and I stayed together for another two weeks, I think, travelling through Iraq, as Saddam was falling, and talking, I'm afraid, about nothing except what had happened to us. And then, finally, we just talked about it somewhere and we got bored with the subject. I think that was a real therapy.

So, for Simpson, his successful trauma therapy technique is talking and time. Could this also be a function of his autobiographical work? I will address such a question in Chapter Seven. Allan Little corroborates:

I'm uncomfortable with public grieving and public displays of one's own emotional response. You have to be good at depicting the emotional responses of others. Keep your own to yourself. Deal with it in your own

way. It's nobody else's business. So yes, I am sort of ... I do have problems with the Centre's public airing of this stuff. But, at the same time, I think it's much better that as an industry we understand what it does to people, some people, by no means all. I think it's a question of balance. It's intuitive. Sorry to come back to this word 'intuitive', but it is.

Once again, Little underlines that his subjective relationship with the institutional 'rules of the game' is intuitive, which implies unconscious and instinctual, learned by experience. So, Keane, Loyd, Little, O'Kane, Simpson and Bowen all acknowledge the occurrence of trauma in their professional lives and consequently the need for therapeutic work on themselves, but they are all against the public institutionalization of this intensely personal experience, and more in favour of adopting individual, time-based therapies that they have learned from subjective experience, maybe even before they started foreign reporting. They are manifestly against any kind of ersatz 'one size fits all' approach to the 'therapeutization' of trauma.

On the subject of therapy and time, Little makes an interesting observation about what he considers to be the historical provenance of trauma awareness in the journalism industry, which does seem to coincide with the inception of the Dart Center in the United States:

I'll tell you what changed our industry's attitude to PTSD and it's the first Gulf War, I think. There were two hostages who were released on either side of the Gulf War, Brian Keenan and John McCarthy. Brian Keenan was released a year before McCarthy. He was flown straight from Damascus to Belfast in a day and, from having been in a dungeon in Beirut, was sitting at his mother's hearth eating bacon and cabbage within 48 hours. It was a mistake and he had a breakdown. Then the Gulf War²⁴ happened and those British pilots got shot down, were held by the Iraqis and it was while they were in captivity that the RAF said, 'we've got to make provision for them'. When they got them back, they were taken away and isolated, and then they were debriefed and given PTSD counselling and examined by guys like

²⁴ The First Gulf War, otherwise known as the Persian Gulf War, took place in early 1991.

Gordon Turnbull who, I think, is probably mentioned in there [Feinstein, 2006]. And that was such a success, or the RAF took the view that it was such a success that when John McCarthy came out, they kept him in an airport for three weeks and he was introduced into his former life very slowly. John McCarthy didn't have the breakdown that Brian Keenan had. That might be because Keenan was an Irishman and romantic and was just inclined that way anyway, whereas McCarthy was an Englishman with public school background and stiff upper lip and all that.

I then asked him how important he thought the role of culture was in Keenan's and McCarthy's respective recoveries from trauma:

Some people might argue but personally I don't think there's anything in that. I knew a stiff-upper-lip English public school boy who drank himself to death at forty-seven, completely unable to talk about this shit.

Hilsum and Snow, both Channel Four journalists, were the most negative about the Dart Centre. When I asked Snow his opinion of Mark Brayne's work with BBC journalists on behalf of the Dart Centre, his response was as follows:

Well, fuck the BBC. I've never had anything to do with them. I only listen to their product. No, I mean, I mean it sounds absolute nonsense.

And Hilsum:

I disagree with him [Mark Brayne] about a lot of this stuff. I've spoken to him many times.

Finally, Pilger was not familiar with the Dart Centre, which is interesting given that he is the least institutional and most independent of the interviewees. Robertson had received e-mails from the Dart Centre but had not attended any events, so did not feel informed enough to make a judgement.

To sum up the thread of this chapter so far, most of the interviewees argue that mental health is an important issue but do not believe that the Dart Centre is an appropriate forum to address it. Many feel uncomfortable about institutional interventions into trauma and prefer to tackle the issue either individually or informally, amongst themselves. This is pertinent because the resistance to Dart seems to reflect the broad belief among the interviewees that emotional issues such as trauma, and maybe compassion too, are individual complex deployments of subjectivity. Brayne himself made the following candid remark:

My fundamental view about the Dart Centre is we don't really need to exist. If journalism had got the plot, we wouldn't need an organization to talk about journalism and trauma.

The Dart Centre has fallen well short of its aims.

On an individual level, Brayne felt Dart had become more about him than its ostensible aims:

The idea is to find a healthy balance where your ego needs to serve the purpose, in it and out of it. I got too 'in' it. It became too much about validation of Mark Brayne's ego.

Brayne agreed with the other interviewees about the fact that the Dart Centre was a reflection of change in the understanding of mental health. He also believed that the 'global psyche' had shifted:

The Dart Centre is in many ways a very inadequate brief flash, a reflection of something very profound that is happening in the global psyche.

This psychological phenomenon is, according to Brayne, emotional intelligence, the acknowledgement of the importance of 'feminine' listening skills:

Good listening is an archetypal feminine quality.

Really effective journalists, I think, have a really strongly developed male and female aspect to them.

The global event that he, like Keane, Little and Bell, believes was the defining event of this change, was Bosnia:

It was the most extraordinary emotional moment of my journalistic career.

Compare this statement with a public remark Little made in December 2010²⁵:

‘The delusions, the idealism, that I shared with Martha Gellhorn, died in Bosnia’.

‘None of the reporting we did changed anything a jot’.

‘The injustice, the dishonour, as Martha Gellhorn put it, were not overturned’.

5.4: Time

I began this chapter on witnessing and trauma by alluding to the fact that there is something peculiar about journalistic media witnessing not only in emotional terms but also in terms of temporality. For example, journalistic witnessing can encompass either the act of representing exciting ‘close-up’ real-time immediacy or ‘standing back’ objective indifference where the act of

²⁵ ‘Reporting the World in an Age of Conflict’, 10th December 2010, BBC Scotland and the Royal Society of Edinburgh annual Christmas lecture.

representing is so passive as to exclude the actor, the agent, the messenger from the message. If you take the British and American reporting of 9/11, for example, there was a lot of narrative produced by the technology of locked off cameras, as well as some highly emotional reporting, especially in American news. This dichotomy that emerges both out of witnessing theory and journalistic discourse complicates journalistic agency in the sense that a more 'close-up' reporting style necessarily makes the journalist more present (as a subjective agent) whereas the latter makes the journalistic agent absent and apparently hidden, less intrusive. Here, the rule of the game of visual impact comes to the fore, where trauma and image operate together as a powerful, political message for Al-Qaida as well as for a so-called 'War on Terror'. 'Close up' is also more hermeneutic, a political bridge between agent and people caught up in the conflict event, whereas 'distant' is, according to its theoretical advocates and practitioners, more conservative, designed to transfer affective experience and ethical responsibility on to the audience. This time and emotion binary opposition is theorized by Scheuer:

'Because we inhabit the moment, subjectivity is always time relative, whereas objectivity tends (with exceptions) to be a more durable good'.
(2008: 76)

Andrew Hoskins talks about television as the medium of time and has done some interesting research on news reporting of conflict during the Gulf War of 1991, the war that launched CNN. One of the conclusions of his research was the following:

'By virtue of the nature of instantaneous reporting and the experience of reporting live from the 'battlefield', a sense of times was by no means neatly comprehended and smoothly repackaged for the benefit of the viewer's orientation throughout. Bernard Shaw in Baghdad (CNN, 16 January 1991), for example, reflects on his experience of the previous (first) night of the war: "There is one sound I will never get out of my mind of this experience ... that was hearing ... that rooster crowing yet still pitch black and the bombs are falling"'.
'

In sum, Hoskins refers here to a particular style of reporting, momentary ('a more complex multi-layered *durée* of time'), personal, impressionistic, witnessing and experiential, that is designed to communicate affect and disturbance (surprise). He continues:

'In perhaps the least constructed time(s) of the coverage, then, there is the most palpable sense of time – that running on and out in the Al-Rashid hotel room. Not, however, in terms of the universal and eternal expanse of clock time, but, rather, in terms of the *particular*, of place. Indeed, the recombination of the universal and the particular, in numerous ways, is perhaps a key aspect of the success of CNN (cf. Volkmer, 1999) and more generally of the temporality of television'. (2001: 230)

What Hoskins suggests here is that, compared to other news bulletins and rolling 24-hour news coverage, this event was broadcast in a less compartmentalized, conventional fashion that placed relatively more emphasis on the particularity, contingency and palpability of the event. The question arises then, if this is true for mainstream televisual reports of the Gulf War, 1991, is it also true of certain big, breaking news stories post-1991, and if so, does this affect journalistic agency and in what ways? Does it affect the use of emotion?

When I asked Snow whether he thought the post-1991 mainstream news reporting of crises and its associated truncation of time had affected journalistic agency, he responded affirmatively. Snow believes that the truncation of time in television news makes journalism more intrusive:

I think, personally, the truncating of time available to retrieve information makes the journalist more intrusive, possibly makes the event more intrusive upon the journalist, because it's more traumatic, you don't have time to adjust to it, to find out what's really going on, and trivializes the emotion to some extent, yes. But, therefore, you are a victim of technology, and all the rest of it that enables you to do stuff in a day that used to take a week.

It follows from Snow's view that distance and objectivity take time so that, if journalistic time becomes truncated, there is less time to stand back, to actively construct objectivity, leaving a journalist more exposed to the event and its contingent unfolding, as well as being intrusive in the news story. Interestingly, Snow also posits that relative protraction of journalistic time can lead to more journalistic emotion, agency and intrusion on the journalist, although he is less negative about this use of time compared to time constraint attributable to the post-1991 television news demands of immediacy:

It could be either way, couldn't it? You've got time to be more emotional if you've got a week to do the piece. You can spend a whole day comforting the woman and then get on with the story and still have only lost a day. Whereas if you lose your day when you're planning for tonight, you've lost the story.

Is it possible that, if more time does lead to more emotion, it is a slightly more politically grounded (through the agentic self) experiential use of emotion than emotional immediacy? Snow also made the interesting point that he had won awards for both kind of reports, recognition that he attributes particularly to his use of emotion in the reports:

And I'm very fortunate because I've lived to take a week – although, actually, I mean, here I would be boasting, I won in 1980, I think, Journalist of the Year, and then I won it last year. And, therefore, I have managed to win it at both ends of the spectrum, and I would say that on both occasion[s] the prize was awarded for emotional reasons. Because they were very emotional reports: the Pakistan earthquake, New Orleans, and something else, I don't know what – Africa.

Little had a traumatic professional experience of foreign correspondent journalism when he worked in Bosnia from 1995 to 1999:

Well, I never really was diagnosed with PTS [post traumatic stress]. I mean, this a myth that's grown up. I was never really formally diagnosed with it. I probably had it. I went to see a doctor and he said, 'it seems to me you've got PTSD'. He said, 'if you want me to refer you to somebody, I will'. And I went away and thought about it and I reached the conclusion, after a while, that having, you know, having been ... suddenly having a name for the chaos that was going around in my mind helped me find my own way out of it. So I never got treated. I never got formally diagnosed.

I asked him whether what was going in his mind was emotional:

Hugely. It was a fuck up. It was a big fuck up.

I then asked him if and how, as far as he was concerned, notions of time dovetail with the use of emotion in journalism, and whether he had a sense that the longer he had spent in Bosnia, the more the boundary between his public and private life had become blurred:

I think it was to do with the amount of time I spent there, the people I got to know there, the age I was. I had done a lot of other reporting but I had never had such a protracted one as that.

At the beginning it was just another story, a very dramatic one and a compelling one but there was no personal stake in it for me, really other than just one's natural sympathy that one feels for people in dire straits. But by the time I had been there three or four years, I had known people through thick and thin and you know you form friendships like that. You form natural human bonds and affections. So, I had to make a decision about certain people. They were no longer journalistic raw material for me.

In Little's Bosnian case, his engagement with his Bosnian subjects became deeper, more personal and subjective over time (years), so that the he could not

comfortably apply the BBC objective model to certain Bosnian acquaintances who had, for him, crossed the line between public and private. It is possible that this boundary was traumatic for him also because it shattered his frame of reference, his internalized 'rules of the game', of what was inside and outside and forced him to see this particular part of the Bosnian story through what Pilger might call non-telescopic eyes.

I asked Little if he had any sense of his trauma being related to the disruption of a boundary between the public and private spheres of his life:

I am sure they were related, and one of the reasons I was glad to leave Bosnia in the end ... I think I said this to you last time, is that I started to feel ... I started to find that I couldn't look certain people in the eye because I felt rather ashamed. I felt tainted by ... a kind of reflected shame. And it was, you know, it was good for me to leave. So, yes, I think those things are connected in the reasons why I felt bound up with shame to do with what was going on in my own head, I am sure. And that had a knock-on effect in terms of how much I wanted to interact with the people there.

What Little is saying here is, at first sight, the opposite of journalistic intrusion being the result of the truncation of time: it is journalistic intrusion occurring as a result of the protraction of journalistic time. The flipside of this phenomenon, so-called parachute journalism, will be addressed in the next chapter. But the common factor is time as a key issue in how foreign correspondents report conflict and trauma and how this transforms their relationships with the subjects of their report, their objectivity, as well as their ethical stances and their very senses of self. The relationship between life narrative, ethics and autobiography is important. The life narrative idea leaves open the developmental aspect of journalists' agency over the whole of their professional careers. It is instructive to compare journalistic positions at different stages in their lives, especially early career versus late career. This will be done in Chapters Six and Seven.

John Simpson's view on the truncation of time tends to echo that of Snow and Little:

If you just rush into a place and have to start reporting on it before you've properly understood what the hell's going on, I think that leads to real weakness. But it's a battle, it's a battle in any organization, and certainly a battle inside the BBC, that you have to fight for the time both to settle into a place and understand it and you have to fight also for the amount of air-time because, if you try to get everything into a minute and a half, there's not an awful lot you can say. It becomes photo caption. You need a bit more space, you have to fight for the space – that's not easy. But I do think the battle is one that everybody's got to fight to be able to have more time to think, more time to write, more time to find out and more time to explain. And these are complicated issues. I used to think when I started off in journalism and for some time afterwards that my job was to say to people, look I know you think Zimbabwe, Kosovo, whatever it may be, is a complicated issue, but actually, if you look at it this way, you can see that it's really quite simple and it follows certain basic rules, etcetera. I don't think that any longer. I think the opposite now. I think that one of the most important functions I can perform is to say to people, 'actually, this is really bloody difficult, don't think there's an easy answer, don't think that now, having screwed up royally in Iraq, the answer is to just say, well, let's get the troops out and say goodbye'. That's no answer.

To sum up this section on the complex relationship between time and trauma, Snow maintains that the truncation of journalistic time to report makes the foreign correspondent more intrusive and the experience is more likely to have a traumatic impact on the journalist. Snow also maintains that the main driver of truncated journalistic time is technology. On the other hand, Little's most traumatic experience in Bosnia was the result of an unusually lengthy period of time spent with the Bosnian people in his reports.

5.5: Trauma and journalistic practice

Meek's preferential understanding of trauma (see 2.4 above) as an unconscious process of political identification rather than conscious compassion sets up an interesting theoretical dynamic. As far as foreign correspondents are

concerned, it reinforces the tension between 'objective' and 'political' practitioners. I would argue, heuristically, that 'political' practitioners act out a more self-perceived conscious, emotional, compassionate relationship between their untraumatized selves and traumatized victims and survivors than their 'objective' counterparts. As Meek would have it, this discourse of identification and empathy is problematic because it 'may participate in structures of power and exclusion', a point that was built into interview question 12. The following is a salient point made by Pilger in my interview with him (and in his 2010 documentary, *The War You Don't See*):

Well, there's a political constraint because most Western reporting sees the world in terms of its usefulness, and they don't like to say that, of course, they're very defensive usually about agreeing to that but that's what it is. The Western reporters and media which dominates the world penetrate other societies with its view of the world, its reporting is all-powerful. So, when a Western reporter arrives, the baggage that he or she drags along is huge. And it comes with, generally speaking, and there are many honourable exceptions for this, certain places are reported in a certain way because the consensus, I would say the establishment consensus in the country from which they've come, usually the United States or Britain or Europe, is that this country ought to be seen in this particular way, its leaders are either acceptable or unacceptable, that it has a good dictator or a bad dictator, or its victims are worthy or they're not worthy. The best example is Tibet. Tibet is high fashion and I think Tibetans should throw off the Chinese if they can and have at the very least an autonomous state. I think the most interesting question certainly about the media campaign in Britain and the United States is why Tibet and why not all the other places? Why not Western Sahara? Why not Palestine? That's rather more urgent. Why not the Kurds in Turkey? Indeed, why the Kurds in Iraq and not the Kurds in Turkey? And so it goes on.

But does Pilger's ability to identify Western institutional journalists' unconscious proclivities to exclude and alienate suggest that he has no such human fallibility? Surely a more independent journalist is also vulnerable not to institutional dogma

and convention but to some form of cultural and political bias, other 'rules of the game'?

In psychological terms, neither kind of agency ('political' and 'objective') admits any internal, self-reflexive conflict in how journalists might view such structures of power. 'Objective' practitioners are more in line with the Meek/Zelizer position because of their acquiescence with and advocacy for 'unconscious' use of emotion and self-denial in objectivity-as-practice. Objectivity-as-practice also does not allow for notions of internal splits in subjective agency. It has complete faith in objectivity-as-value, as scientific value. It claims to leave this emotional labour to the audience. Neither 'political' or 'objective' practices admit internal splits in deployment of subjectivity.

Journalistic trauma is a partly biologically driven, objective and scientific 'story', told through the journalistic body and psyche and a result of an unacknowledged tension between self and Other. This tension is relatively greater for objective journalists who deploy the most distance between self and Other, especially the television journalists. Given that the correspondents in the research group who profess to have experienced trauma are mostly, if not exclusively, television 'objective' ones, is there something peculiar about demands being placed on them that are relatively absent for press correspondents such as Loyd, O'Kane, Fisk and Pilger? It is plausible that focus on images, by virtue of being impactful, is more traumatic because telling a story through image arguably puts the journalist in a more spectatorial position him/herself, more emotionally cut off from the human dimension of the story. From a spectatorial perspective, images immediately unconsciously bypass our slower, more rational faculties, creating a more direct conduit of affect from passive journalistic agency to viewer. In this chapter and Chapter Four, journalistic distance was discussed as a means of 'objectively' witnessing and shielding oneself from emotional interruption, such as trauma. This is also perceived to provide the least manipulated kind of story to meet the imagined expectations of the viewers. To a certain extent, the 'objective' journalist acts as the viewers' proxy, playing the dual role of spectator and reporter, so the mediated divide between journalist and viewer is bridged. This phenomenon exists in the media analytic literature, whereby agency of distant suffering is discussed as a conflation of journalistic and viewer agency. This will be addressed at more length in Chapter Six. It is interesting because it seems to constitute a

merging of the 'rules of the game' of visual impact and centring that is now operating in journalistic and academic discourse. The Peters' advocacy for bodily testament and 'closer' engagement by journalists, on the other hand, is surely likely to lead to more journalistic trauma. For some writers such as Kierkegaard, Zizek, Pound and Peters, trauma is the emergence of a new kind of truth, the Real in Lacanian terms, a subversion of objectivity because trauma demands the bodily and psychic participation of the witness; trauma occurs in the observed and the observer.

Maybe press journalists do not need to approach traumatized people so closely, as they perform a less visual, more interpretative form of observation. They can glean facts and visual information indirectly, if necessary. This does not by any means preclude the possibility for press journalists to perform the role of eye witnesses, but they still have to translate their witnessing into reports in a literally non-visual medium, the written word; whereas there is a certain quality of television images that is believed to be aesthetic, affective and untranslatable. The writing process necessarily involves a degree of self-analysis and therapy, as pointed out by O'Kane:

You can feel extraordinarily emotional but the basic material, the rules that you apply as a conduit, which is basically what you are, still apply. Is this true? Is this honest? Does this reflect the story? Is this a narrative that you want to reveal the story? And in the process of processing that, you can sit and cry at your typewriter or your computer, as I've done. But I think feeling emotionally and strongly and passionately about it probably helps me to do a better job and feel a sense of responsibility.

This important disclosure by O'Kane is the key link with autobiographical discourse and the link is complex agency. Television journalists watch filmed images of conflict and trauma and then superimpose their own voices; a somewhat different process.

As described above, a significant traumatic event for Simpson was being bombed in 2003 by the Americans in Iraq, resulting in the death of his younger colleague, a translator. Simpson says that he and the news crew subsequently

talked about this traumatic episode repeatedly for several weeks after the incident in order to therapeutically recalibrate, rebalance themselves. Press journalists can process trauma by writing; television ones tend to have to do it after the images have been seen. Press journalists can, therefore, manage more easily what they perceive to be a safe boundary between 'safe' self and traumatized Other.

Is there something more traumatic about engaging with trauma in a strictly pared-down, visual way? Little talks about letting pictures represent, reflect the central narrative or discourse of a story (an institutional rule of the game), necessitating a 'pulling back' of his potentially intrusive journalistic self, minimizing his words, which may anchor the stories, leaving the visual element foregrounded. This is in contradistinction to Pilger's prescription, which is an appeal for grounding the story through the self and not brooking any gap between self and traumatized people; while at the same time, of course, maintaining an emotional, secure distance from trauma. The main criticism of Pilger's journalistic practice levelled at him by his detractors is that, despite his claim to provide non-objective, on-the-ground representation of people in his reports, his journalistic material is preconceived by political agency. All of this begs the question, if Pilger is able to bridge the distance between his professional self and people who are in less privileged life-threatening positions than himself or his culture by merging himself into the people, why does he not experience trauma? Part of the reason may be that Pilger has never been a television journalist and has not been a press foreign correspondent (for *the Daily Mirror*) since about 1980. Since that time, he has been a freelance 'commentary and analysis' journalist, now providing bimonthly pieces for the *New Statesman*, as well as being a documentary filmmaker.

Time, in particular, it has been argued, is also an important dimension in journalistic trauma. For Snow, truncation of time, with the aid of modern technology, leads to more 'journalistic' intrusion, sometimes leading to more trauma for the interviewees of the correspondent rather than journalistic trauma. On the other hand, Little experienced trauma in Bosnia as a result of the protraction of time spent living there leading to a blurring of his public and private self, a disturbing intrusion into his personal life that he had not been prepared for.

In the introductory chapter, I hypothesized the conceptual link between the institutional practice of objectivity as somewhat emotionally dissociative and the experience of trauma as dissociative. Having discussed at length fourteen

professional-life foreign correspondent experiences of constituting through their practices objectivity and trauma, I believe the hypothesis is supported empirically. I now want to expound an analytical distinction between making trauma and experiencing trauma. I believe this comes out of the material when respondents like Hilsum and Pilger talk about their trauma as being self-indulgent and narcissistic, compared to less fortunate people on whom they report every day, people whose everyday lives are caught up in conflict, crisis and war. As Hilsum says, we can jump on a plane, they cannot. This is why trauma has to be viewed in historical cultural terms, as well as individual ones. Surely it is a traumatized culture that consumes other cultures' suffering and traumatic pain for commercial institutional advantage, whereby viewers are co-opted into the regressive viewing of other people's trauma in the name of entertainment? This is why the red thread of this academic narrative is objectivity to trauma to emotional attachments, with a sense of an ending of autobiography as the epitome of complex agency. What I will argue in Chapter Seven is that autobiographical, subjective discourse is not the end; in fact, it is only the beginning.

Journalism of emotional attachment, compassionate practice, is put forward by certain scholars and foreign correspondents alike as a solution to the mass media's industrial use of human pain and suffering for entertainment. This is what I will explore in the next chapter. In a world of foreign correspondence that is forced to perform capitalist institutional 'rules of the game', how can a foreign correspondent constitute emotional attachments to the people on which s/he is reporting, whose countries are traumatized by war, conflict and crisis? I have put forward two different theories of witnessing, which I call unconscious and compassionate. In cultural terms, is it possible that postcolonial British foreign correspondent witnessing is compassionate on the surface but is still driven by old, colonial, violent emotional and traumatic, instinctual forces? Such a model corroborates other media scholars' work on distant suffering that theorizes the mass media's aestheticization, ironization, sensationalization and 'narcissization' (my word) of emotion to conceal political truth, a phenomenon that is also evident in development discourse.

The next chapter looks at the role of compassion in journalistic discourse. If we accept the argument that foreign correspondent reporting that is closer to sufferers and victims produces more visceral, more traumatic, more engaged,

compassionate journalism, are we talking about compassion as charity, pejoratively referred to as conspicuous compassion – the performance of care – or about social action? Is compassion about intentionality or real social change? If reporting compassionately takes the form of acting for humanitarian reasons in a conflict, is that partiality? A solution to the problem of partiality might be the journalistic application of universal compassion and humanitarianism but then we are in danger of returning full-circle to the ethical conflict of interest between particular compassion and universal impartiality or objectivity.

Chapter Six: Emotional Attachments

Chapter Four discussed the issues of agency and emotion through the prism of institutional 'rules of the game', principally the convention of objectivity and found that the individual journalist interview research results heuristically constitute a continuum from objectivity-based agency on the one hand, to politics-based agency on the other, with a proviso that both the most objective and political agents do have some commonality in their treatment of the 'internal' self vis-à-vis the external Other. That is, emotional agency is always conceived as directed out of the 'inner' self towards the external event and others involved in the event being reported; the difference being what the starting point of agency in the journalist is. Objective journalists prefer to see this starting point as relatively fixed. Political journalists are semi-fixed in their adherence to truth mediated by self. Objective journalists situate, camouflage and imagine themselves in the centre of the audience viewing (or reading) the story. Political agents understand agency as more decentring. They are able to centre themselves inside the witnessed conflict rather than outside it, performing a text as well as a context of news stories about war, conflict and crisis, and place their heads somewhat above the parapet in order to, in Fisk's words, 'monitor power' rather than act as stenographers. This decentring enables traumatic history to be read as 'our' trauma, as well as 'theirs'.

Chapter Four broadly laid down another layer on this intersubjective continuum or hermeneutic paradigm, demonstrating how the foreign correspondents' uses of emotion underpin their ethical positions and how these positions lead them to either endorse or alienate their peers' uses of emotion. In the last chapter, competition was identified by Loyd as a strong rule of the institutional game. Chapter Four also concluded that the journalists who see themselves as more objective, regard their practice as relatively more moral for the very reason that they do not make any explicit value judgement or interpretation. They use the 'political' model negatively to justify and validate their own practice, denigrating it as 'polemical' (Little), 'manipulative' (Simpson), or advocacy-based. Likewise, the 'political' journalists reflect negatively on the 'objective' reporters whose use of emotion is described as 'false' (Pilger), as more attached to the asymmetrical status quo than to the sufferers of conflict.

Chapter Five focused its attention on traumatic interruptions of objectivity that disrupt the very boundary between objectivity and politics, maybe even between 'true' and 'false' emotion. Furthermore, the experience of journalistic trauma leads to a new understanding of practice that is intersubjective, not entirely subjective and potentially a new objectivity, certainly as far as recognizable human biological symptoms of trauma are concerned. The objective/political conflict exemplified above is stressed by the journalistic media analysis of Bourdieu and Tester. As argued in Chapter Two, for Bourdieu, the journalistic field is split between sensationalism and objectivity. Tester develops this idea, suggesting a journalistic agentive conflict between compassion and impartiality. In actual fact, he sees a tangle of three logics that divide the journalistic profession against itself: the history of the ethic of compassion, bystander journalism and the logic of the market (2001:28). I would argue that this division could not be more unequivocally exemplified than by the division (outlined above) between Pilger and BBC practitioners.

6.1: Partiality and prejudice

Having discussed how trauma is a possible symptom of the 'Real' breakdown of journalistic objectivity played out through the journalistic body, mind and psyche, compassion is the third node of emotional discourse to emerge from this research that is deemed important by both the interviewees and by media theorists. One way into the compassion debate from objectivity and trauma is through the concepts of partiality and identification. Objective practitioners believe that any emotional attachment is a prejudice and so objectivity as an ideal is adopted as a guide for good journalistic practice. Objectivity strives to be impartial and not associate one's 'private' self with, or identify with, the 'public' subjects of one's professional reports.

Trauma is a breakdown or failure of that intention of impartiality attributable to a sudden removal of distance between journalistic self and Other, a form of disassociation, maybe a form of intuitive, involuntary identification. This is clearly not under rational, conscious control, so is more of a swerve to a kind of

affective, bodily experience. But, as these interviews and the interviewees' other autobiographical work show, after the trauma has been experienced and processed by an individual journalist, it can shed new light on partiality, identification and objectivity. Compassion, after all, is a halfway place between objectivity and trauma. It is a theory and practice of partial identification with people in the journalistic field of conflict and trauma that is aware of the dangers, both of completely closing out the Other, and equally those of letting the Other colonize one's intimate, interior voice. The suggestion is, if a journalist desires the Other's trauma, a form of masochism is enacted in which the desirer's body and mind become intensely entangled with the trauma of the sufferer or survivor, which then has to be split off from the psyche of the traumatized journalist.

With regard to witnessing, this thesis has highlighted two theoretical discourses, those of unconscious civil inattention and compassionate embodied agency. In practice both these offer the reporter the ability to feel the game. One is an 'alienated' agency, constituting self through Other. The other, also an 'alienating' agency, an acting of unfamiliarity, constitutes the self unconsciously, deferring compassionate and ethical agency to the perceived audience or viewers by deploying the centring rule of the game.

The compassion debate is an ethical one as well as a moral one. I do not address morality and ethics as interchangeable concepts. I understand morality to be related to personal character, while ethics is framed by a social system in which such morals are applied. In other words, ethics point to standards or codes of behaviour expected by the group (institutional, national, cultural or even global) to which the individual belongs. Here, the group is a subset of the field of British foreign correspondents. Both a person's morality and ethical stance can be either Other-dependent or dependent on what Little calls a good, Western liberal bias. Therefore, as argued at the end of the last chapter, both models of moral and ethical agency are vulnerable to traumatic interruption. It is possible that division and trauma within the journalistic field could also be a manifestation of conflict between 'subjective' moral beliefs and 'objective' ethical positioning.

Chouliaraki (2006: 8) argues that agency ('the representation of action on the sufferer's misfortune') refers to two 'spectatorial' positions that correspond to the duality of mediation:

‘The ordinary spectator who acts as if she were in the scene of action (the condition of immediacy and identification) and the reflexive spectator, who acts as if she were heard and judged by others (the condition of hypermediacy and deliberation)’. (ibid.: 45)

She also argues that:

‘The duality of agency – simultaneously theatrical emotion and agoraic deliberation – again manifests itself in mediation as immediacy and hypermediacy’. (ibid.: 44)

From the two above statements, I infer that Chouliaraki understands ‘the duality of mediation’ and ‘the duality of agency’ to be the same thing, thereby not differentiating between the agency of journalists and the agency of spectators. However, she does refer to ‘the representation of suffering’ as related to ‘the paradox of technology’:

‘... the representation of suffering needs to skilfully navigate between objective observation and emotion, be this empathy, anger or shock and awe. Whereas impartiality gestures towards the necessity for a dispassionate and rational predisposition on the part of spectators, emotionality is necessary for their “swing to commitment” to a moral cause’. (ibid.: 44)

According to Chouliaraki, ‘the paradox of technology’:

‘... closes the moral distance between spectators and sufferers and so cultivates a cosmopolitan disposition in public life, yet, at the same time, it fictionalizes suffering and leads spectators to indifference’. (ibid.: 37)

One might ask, does technology close moral distance or does human agency? Does that make journalistic compassionate agency redundant? Could technology not also open moral distance? Such a paradox surely invites a more complex agentive analysis. A general statement that technology imputedly opens moral proximity, presumably a positive ethical function, but also fictionalizes suffering, clearly undesirably, begs the question: surely there is more than one mode or 'tone' of moral journalistic encoding or agency as well as more than one mode of active audience decoding of moral appeal or authenticity of suffering? One also has to assume that Chouliaraki is addressing only television technology here. It lies beyond the scope of this thesis, but it would be instructive to ask whether different media technologies have the same logic. How about new media technology, such as mobile phones and the internet, for example, compared to TV?

As far as compassion is concerned, Chouliaraki acknowledges that emotion is the conduit of immediacy, identification and commitment, although it is not clear exactly what she means by 'swing to commitment' and how this manifests itself in the spectators. Also, how does 'emotionality' in mediation translate into identification and commitment? Are journalists, as instruments of mediation, allowed to express political commitment alongside 'emotionality'? What is the difference between 'empathy' and 'commitment'?

One of Chouliaraki's examples of agency is empathy, which she describes as follows:

'Whereas empathy orientates the spectators' feeling towards the benefactors, the figures who alleviate suffering, denunciation orientates their feeling towards the persecutors, the figures who commit the evil, and, finally, the aestheticization of suffering invites the spectators to indulge in their own feelings of awe and sublimation vis-à-vis the sufferers' misfortunes'. (ibid.: 44)

Why does empathy orientate the spectators' feeling towards the benefactors and alleviators of suffering rather than the progenitors? None of my interviewees believes that it is his/her role to denounce persecutors, mainly because that would be regarded as spectatorship manipulation and would detract from the truthfulness

of his/her agency. Even press foreign correspondent interviewees such as Fisk and Pilger prefer to 'denounce' in newspaper opinion columns, current affairs articles and documentaries, not conventional newspaper reports.

It is evident that different journalists make use of different media for this very 'activist' purpose – for example, Robert Fisk's erstwhile column for the Saturday edition of *The Independent*, Fergal Keane and other BBC correspondents' *From Our Own Correspondent* stories and Jon Snow's tweets. What accounts for the agency of suffering on television is what Chouliaraki calls 'practices of mediation':

'The reference to the agora and the theatre is important because, in both metaphors, agency does not inhere in the spectators' cognitive or emotional capacities to think or feel but resides in the distinct discursive practices of mediation'. (ibid.: 44)

'... agency in television can only take the form of action at a distance – that is action associated with the practices of the agora and the theatre'. (2006: 88)

'Agora' is:

'... a metaphor of agency as people gather to gaze and reflect upon – precisely to contemplate – a theme of common interest by means of dialogue and argumentation'. (ibid.: 44)

What is the difference between the agency of suffering and the agency of commitment? Surely they are both politically and emotionally connected? If Chouliaraki understands journalistic agency as only 'theatre' and 'agora' for spectators, this is by no means compatible with how my interviewees understand their agency in terms of objective, traumatic and compassionate concerns; a fact that I believe has been demonstrated amply in the preceding two chapters.

The discussion of compassion also raises the complex issue of true and false emotion, a debate that clearly rages both in the journalistic world as well as the

media analytic one. O’Kane’s view on this, as already referred to in Chapter Four, is that objective emotion is false because it disables identification whereas ‘truthful’ reporting must contain an important element of subjective agency. Pilger distinguishes between true and ‘gratuitous’ emotion. This discourse, at first sight, mirrors the Boruah model of true/fictional emotion, Boltanski’s theory of real/fictional emotion and Tester’s differentiation between emotion that either leads to audience social action or emotion that inheres in the personality of the journalist, all of which have been outlined in Chapter Two. Boruah (1988) states that what is put forward as something on which one can act or attempt to act appears as ‘real’. But real emotion, for Boruah and Tester, is entirely dependent on whether apparently real emotion translates into concrete social action outside of the journalistic field. This means fictional emotion can be defined as ‘emotion without action’ and implies that journalistic emotion is literally between individual affect and social effect (Boltanski, 1999: 152; Boruah, 1988). Tester takes a similar position to Boltanski and Boruah:

‘... it can be proposed that compassion is identifiable as morality only as and when it is the basis of distinctive forms of social action on the part of the actors who together constitute the audience. All the time that compassion does not occasion action, logically it cannot be identified with morality. Instead, it is a personality trait’. (2001: 74)

This shared ‘activist’ discourse (between certain theorists and journalists) highlights the precariousness of compassion’s pivotal nature between theory and practice. It is precarious because of a complex communicative relationship between the emotional intention of the sender of the message and its reception by audiences. It is uncontrollable by an individual journalist, who finds her/himself stretched in space and time between subjects of the story and readers of the story. It remains, like objectivity, an ideal.

The Boruah/Tester/Boltanski theory appears to support the Fisk and Pilger models but contradicts the Simpson and Little models of emotion, which clearly have a problem with emotion charged by the journalist with an intention to act. But what, one might ask, is a journalist supposed to do when faced with immediate

horrific human suffering? In the 'objective' school's view, this is the viewer's concern since, for objective practitioners, intuitive, civilly inattentive 'emotion without action' is a more ethical journalistic position. Their understanding of compassion is to remain as true as possible to the emotional contours of the subject matter, within the confines of objectivity, in a way that creates more space for viewer compassion. In other words, the more you 'pull back', the more the viewers might be pulled in. The assumption here is that, if you over empathize on behalf of the viewers, you appear to the viewers as less sincere and more engaged with yourself than the story, more intrusive.

Boltanski and Chouliaraki both employ the language of drama, theatre, performance and spectatorship to theorize media agency and distant suffering. Boltanski (1999: 152) states that emotion 'staged' by the media occupies an unstable position between real and fictional emotion. My understanding of his use of the word 'staged' is that, despite the most compassionate intention, the mediation of other people's physical and mental suffering, trauma is always a representation rather than a reality, a communication and knowledge gap, an interruption (Pinchevski, 2005) between human bodies, as argued in Chapter Four (Peters in Frosh and Pinchevski, 2009). This suggests that, for Boltanski, the mediated representation of emotion already separates the journalist from the event, even before it reaches the viewers and listeners. But it is simply not true to say the journalist is never part of the story. For example, Martin Bell was shot in Bosnia, John Simpson was injured in Iraq. For Boltanski, the event is real, but the television 'spectator' is cut off from the real event, separated, in such a way as to make the event seem staged and fictional. Boruah and Tester focus on the means and ends of journalistic agency and whether or not use of emotion culminates in social action. For Boltanski, Boruah and Tester, the 'reality' of media emotion can only be retrieved if it translates into social action. Unless emotion in the form of compassion leads to identifiable action by the audience, maybe by passing through compassion to outrage and anger, it can remain only fictional emotion, either trapped in the personality of the journalist or lost in the ether of mediation. Boltanski's solution to fictional emotion is as follows:

'To prevent the unacceptable drift of emotions towards the fictional we must maintain an orientation towards action, a disposition to act, even if

this is only by speaking out in support of the unfortunate. But also there must not be too much doubt about the real existence of the unfortunates represented, or about the intentions or desires of the presenters and spectators' (Boltanski, 1999: 153)

This position is somewhat pejoratively referred to as 'mousy solidarity', 'armchair politics' or 'slacktivism'. It reflects an ambivalent discourse prevalent in the academic world, a discourse that centres and prefers 'real' objective, social scientific research; and 'decentres' armchair theory, attributed to the Frankfurt School. Such a discourse has a political agenda, identified in this research, which associates social active discourse with emotionality and narcissism.

Simpson and Little point to fictional emotion as unobjective, biased emotion, unethical. Little uses the notion of '*phony*' journalistic acting and Simpson uses the word '*manipulative*' to denote false emotion. Hilsum agrees:

Journalists who show a lot of emotion on camera, the chances are that quite a lot of that is not real. I think there's a lot of fake emotion that goes on. To be able to do it properly on camera, I wonder if that was the first take, or whether it took a couple of takes. I am very suspicious of it.

As stated in Chapter Four, Hilsum believes that objectivity and facts come before emotion, since emotion can destabilize objectivity and compromise professional distance:

You have to make sure that your emotion doesn't interfere with objectivity.

This seems to imply that she does not believe that objectivity can interfere with emotion rather than the other way around. Hilsum makes a distinction between empathy and identification:

You have to be very careful with this identification and empathy thing. It blinds you to your basic job as a journalist, which is to find out the facts and relay them.

The best working example offered by Hilsum of the above was when she reported the Beslan school massacre in 2004. Here, her trauma management, as argued above in the previous chapter, was tested to the limit, so her crew had to stop filming. Her boundary between empathy and identification that she could not cross was tested by the distraught suffering of ‘macho’ men, even more so than grieving mothers:

I don't know Russia very well but it is a fairly macho society. It's an emotional society as well. It's a society where men do show emotions but it was very striking and unusual anywhere in the world, thank God, to see a place where 300 children have been killed and the sort of collective emotion that you see from men in that. But if you go somewhere in the Middle East, the ritual is that women show emotion and the men don't. But I haven't really seen that kind of raw pain on a mass scale amongst men before and it really struck me.

Bowen believes you can separate your emotion from the emotion of people's stories:

I would say that you can express the emotion of these people's stories without expressing your own emotion. You can use plain language to put over the plight of people who are suffering in a way that can be extremely gripping.

Keane, Fisk, Loyd, Snow and O'Kane, despite the fact that they are more advocacy-prone, more ‘political’, also signal fictional emotion as emotion interrupted by the inward-looking, narcissistic self. Brayne's ideal prescription for use of emotion is what he refers to as ‘*dual awareness*’. This is a borrowed

psychological expression signifying the journalistic ability to report his immediate emotional experience, as well as a story, a political context. His role model for this style of reporting is Allan Little:

Allan is extraordinary, amazingly powerful and touching; grown-up. And he's got the story as well. He's got the politics and the context.

Brayne's experience of reporting the democratic uprising in Tiananmen Square, China, in 1989 stood out for him as an example of the undoing of his dual approach, leading to over-identification:

I hugely identified with the aspirations of the students against the repressive regime, or what was perceived at the time to be a repressive regime ... I read unconsciously into that story a lot of my own personal dynamic and drama.

Here, Brayne argues that his compassion was unconscious and, therefore, fictional. This formulation contradicts the binary theoretical model as compassion equals false emotion, unconscious (instinctual, intuitive). For him, the balance was tipped in favour of emotion:

I was very good in my coverage of the emotion, students' demands, the passions, I did vox pops. I interview well. I got people to talk. I speak some Chinese. I was right in there.

But:

I had no perspective on the politics of it all.

Here we have a clash between the BBC institutional 'rules of the game' of dispassion and detachment with Brayne's subjective feel for the game. Despite

having moved from being a foreign correspondent to being a psychotherapist, Brayne still falls back on a discourse that may pre-date his BBC days and have been formed culturally and educationally.

Pilger dismisses all institutional use of journalistic emotion as fictional (his word is 'gratuitous') and sees 'real' emotion as self undifferentiated from subject-matter, unseparated, unalienated and untraumatic compassion for suffering people.

I argue that Keane, Fisk, Loyd, Snow, O'Kane and Pilger come closest to meeting the emotional ethical theoretical concerns of Boruah and Tester because they possess, to varying degrees, more political agency than their BBC television counterparts, even though none of them specifically addresses the issue of social action. To map Boltanski's model on to the research group's theorization of use of emotion, none of the interviewees would accept that their 'staging' of emotion fictionalizes events for their viewers and readerships. Or, at least, the 'objective' ones might concede that this lies outside of their control or agency. In fact, it is unlikely that any of them would accept the word 'stage' to describe their work because of its negative connotation and its association with falsity and fiction, with histrionics and performance. However, they all claim the (negative) use of 'fictional' emotion mostly by other foreign correspondents, which they attribute to different things, 'factionalism' [my word] (the position of a political group; propaganda, advocacy, campaigning, partisanship), egotism or narcissism, the realm of the internal, intimate, private and personal or institutions (vested power interest). In sum, 'fictional' emotion is associated with political prejudice and the self. All of these complex competing affiliations and attachments lead to divisions within the discourse of the journalistic field.

With regard to his use of emotion reporting conflict and trauma, the only connection Pilger makes with the audience is the notion of 'sharing the experience'. In other words, what constitutes 'real' emotion for him is not dependent on whether or not the audience/viewers take a form of socio-political action as a result of reading or viewing his stories, but whether a foreign correspondent is able to represent truly the emotions of people 'on the ground' who are engaged in social and political struggle, so that this can then be shared with the audience/viewers.

In the course of my interviews, my discussion with Keane led (through snowballing and recommendations) to Little, to O’Kane, to Loyd and then to Fisk. Significantly, all of these five foreign correspondents (as well as Pilger) regard themselves as a distinguishable group of compassionate journalists and tend to see each other as friends, as well as colleagues. Elias provides a useful theory of this phenomenon, which he calls ‘group charisma’:

‘ ... bonds of identification of individuals with their group and with their participation by proxy in the collective attributes’. (Elias and Scotson, 1994: 103)

O’Kane was the most vocal about this phenomenon:

You could call it Catholicism. I mean, I think the thing that makes journalists stand out has been that the good ones have something that’s very important and that’s called compassion in people. And I think that Fergal Keane has a great deal of compassion. Fergal is a Catholic from Cork. They both have compassion. Does Catholicism make you more compassionate? I would say, ‘yes’, probably, because it’s about caring for other people.

I suggest that this ‘group charisma’ identifies a powerful informal rule of the game for the five respondents, that unites them personally, as a friendship group, and professionally, across institutional boundaries. It was an important assisting factor in the ‘snowball’ aggregating process of this research methodology. O’Kane highlights common cultural ground between Keane and herself, the fact that not only are they not English but they are both raised Catholics, providing them with a religious compassionate education that, in later life, helps them to identify each other as well as to deploy compassion in their practice as foreign correspondents. Little was Presbyterian (Church of Scotland). O’Kane also makes two interesting points connecting Keane, emotion and writing:

But the fact that he writes more beautifully than any other TV reporter is a kind of asset. Is it emotion or is it about beautiful writing? And if the beautiful writing conveys the emotion, then are they trying to get it to be more emotional, or are they trying to use the tools that are there to tell the story? It's about the tools, isn't it? We have the tools and some people don't.

When I broached to Keane the awkward subject of how some journalists regarded his deployment of subjectivity in his work as mawkish and self-parodic, his response was that these detractors were 'little Englanders'. This revealing detail reinforces theory of 'group charismatic' identificatory process as well as its opposite, a dissociational process. Another important point O'Kane makes here is that emotional agency is manifest in language, in Keane's 'beautiful writing', as well as the language of Loyd, Little and Fisk, as subjective deployable resources. She also maintains that such an emotional agency has nothing to do with sex or gender, more to do with 'objectivity':

It's not a gender thing. It's about compassion, in my view.

I think that if you're talking about the kind of writing that seems to be emotional, my thesis on that is that it's not particularly more emotional. And if you use the detail of the situation and you write well, then of course it's emotional. You touch a chord because you write about humanity and about what's happening to people, so it is emotional. But, actually, in the process of doing that, you're just using objective skills.

O'Kane's statement is quite close to a theoretical notion of complex agency. She understands the gap between objectivity-as-value and objectivity-as-practice and, in that gap, she sees herself, an individual, subjective agent of foreign correspondence.

Keane is put forward by Snow, amongst others, as an example of a journalist who tries to share his experience of reporting conflict and trauma in such a way that is deemed 'emotional', a departure from the BBC objective norm. Keane

is placed in the ‘sensationalist’ camp by Tester, an observation that seemed to resonate with Snow, who makes the following comment about him:

Well, I would regard him as highly emotional.

God, you couldn't get much further than Fergal Keane could you?

Well, he knows how to draw the listener and the viewer in, and it may not even be an intentional thing, but undoubtedly I think you could say that he's at the top end of the emotional scale, but then I wouldn't say I was beyond it myself. I mean, I was in New Orleans last year – it's very, very difficult to deny emotion in a situation like that, where you're almost thrown into the position of rescuer because the whole thing has fallen apart so badly. And I would say that those reports that in the end make biggest impact are those that in the end engage the viewer or the listener, and that is done through emotion. It's not something I think you can really ...
[inaudible]; *it's just there*'.

Once again, Keane is lauded for his singular ability to empathize without trying, to feel the game, i.e. instinctually. Snow says that Keane has a respected ability to communicate suffering emotionally that affects the audience, ‘draws them in’, presumably getting dangerously close to but not getting too ‘*embroiled*’ (Snow’s term) with emotion. In theoretical terms, Keane is going against the grain of institutional convention by ‘decentring’ but the point Snow makes is that this can also have the effect of ‘centring’ an audience. Or, of course, the audience, like certain other journalists, may reject Keane’s agency as emotional, narcissistic, political.

This affectivity is regarded by all the respondents as an asset in Keane’s case but also as a dangerous model because it cannot be imitated, since Keane is apparently able to deploy it unconsciously, a point already made in Chapter Four. This is how Hilsum put it:

Fergal suffers from having some bad imitators, which have probably not done him any good. I think he probably started it and he probably can sustain it but the others cannot. And I think that doesn't help him.

There is an implied sense that there is something in Keane's emotional make-up, something formative, subjective and unique that is deployed in his professional work. This point will be pursued more forensically in the next chapter. If we then map this complexity on to the witnessing compassion and unconscious models, it is instructive to observe that Keane, according to how he constitutes himself and how his peer group perceive him, manages successfully to be both compassionate and objective in the sense of intuitive. Bowen makes the point well:

Fergal would not have been able to have the success that he's had as a journalist, as a writer, if he had been incapacitated by his emotions. He's not. He's fed on them and he's used them as a driving force in some ways.

The implication is that, if not done well, affectivity leads to journalistic intrusion into the story, political manipulation and journalistic grandstanding or celebrity. In other words, if not done well, there is no real compassion. What Snow seems to have a problem with is conscious emotion, which is presumably to be regarded as false emotion. Keane is aware of this and remains candid about a difficult period of his professional life, following his traumatic experience of reporting the Rwandan genocide in 1994:

However, what I do think is that after Rwanda what happened to me was that I saw the world in an incredibly dark way and I found myself drawn again and again to depressing heartbreaking stories. That wasn't healthy for me and it wasn't good journalism. It wasn't good journalism because the world isn't just like that.

This phase in Keane's biography represents an interruption, a breakdown in Keane's professional deployment of subjectivity. Keane's train of thought is interesting here

because he superimposes an 'objective' view ('the world isn't just like that') on top of his own perception and experience; he intersubjectively self-corrects. Note that he also refers to the historical period 1990 to 1994 as a 'cauldron' in which immense 'psychological and emotional pressure' was brought to bear (externally) on foreign correspondents, like himself. Note also that Loyd made his professional name during this period, a period during which, as disclosed in my interview with him, he experienced great psychological pressure as a result of the competitive rule of the institutional journalist game. Keane then makes the point that the truncation of time can also contribute to an inadvisable exposure of the self in a news report:

And Africa, which is my particular interest, wasn't just like that. And, if you want to look at a particular instance, I was on my way to do a 'Great Railway Journey' in Japan for BBC2 [January 1999], and they rang me here and said, and in a sense I was kind of typecast, stereotyped, they rang and said there was a famine in Southern Sudan, 'we want a big hitter like you involved'.

What Keane means by a 'big hitter' is, to all intents and purposes, an elite journalist, a foreign correspondent who is relatively familiar to the British viewing public and, maybe, one who is impactful and good at engaging viewers at an emotional level, as attested by Snow, Simpson and others. But Keane is keenly aware of the dangers of becoming an institutional tool for sensationalization. Note, as referred to above, that Keane was one of the big hitters called upon to report the 7th July London bombings in 2005.

Snow, despite professing to some overlap, constitutes himself differently to Keane when it comes to emotional engagement with some news stories. There is an interesting example in Snow's autobiography, as he recounts it, where his compassion for a Ugandan woman in need of immediate help was at odds with his professional obligation to report the story. This is how he recounts the event:

'One part of me wanted to stay and help, the other knew we had an emotional and gripping account of the unseen tyrant'. (2005: 97)

I quoted this passage to Snow in my interview with him, inviting him to expand on the conflict of interest:

Well, it's a judgment you do have to make, and that is, how much can I do for the woman anyway? And actually, if I tell the story, will it have, in a much bigger sense, a much bigger impact on her and her people, the victims of the tyrant? And clearly, the latter is the case. You make the judgment that you do what you can and you get on and tell the story.

I asked Snow if there had ever been moments where he had decided not to go with the story for compassionate reasons:

No, I think you are – well intrusion's a completely different matter. But I mean, if we're just dealing with that conundrum, I think that in the end there is never a case for abandoning the story. You have not been dispatched to go and save people's lives, you have been dispatched to tell people at home, who may or may not want to know, what is going on.

For Snow, here, the conflictual line between immediate compassionate assistance and industrial demand for 'gripping emotion' is well drawn. His compassion exists but has to be overridden by the greater good of Channel Four viewers. But the imperative is not objectivity, as Tester might have it, but informing British viewers. Snow demarcates a clear boundary between reporting and social action that does not fit Boltanski, Boruah or Tester's theory of 'real' emotion. He makes an endorsement of not veering from the professional journalistic practice of storytelling. This incident begs the question, is it a contractual obligation to Channel Four that really stops him from stepping temporarily outside of his journalistic role? Would a more independent, less institutionalized journalist have more time to do both, to assist the woman and later write up the story?

Most of the interviewees bring notions of good and bad emotion into the discussion, which they then connect with ethical concerns. This binary opposition reflects the binary opposition discussed in Chapter Two between individually

journalistically constituted objective and political journalism, between dispassionate and impassioned reporting. The objective school's ethical position, articulated most clearly by Simpson, is that value judgements about conflict and trauma belong exclusively to the domain of the viewers and, therefore, ethical reporting for him subscribes to the scientific Enlightenment model. This is a kind of democratic liberal pluralist consumer sovereignty model. The kind of journalism that steps outside of this convention of objectivity is subsequently reckoned inferior in its moral fabric and a less than ethical excursion across the boundary of objective reporting. The institutional ethical system behind this objective approach is that ethics is a matter of political and cultural affect, in individuals. In other words, according to self-avowed practitioners of the convention, there is no perceived ethical conflict of interest between objectivity and individual agency or self. Note Jon Snow's recent Channel Four promotional slogan: 'It's not up to us to define what journalism is. It's up to the people who consume news to make up their own minds' (Channel 4; 17/7/09). On the other hand, the less objective and more political practitioners take the view that this elision between objectivity and agency is so powerful that it can distort or even censor, often unconsciously, the nature and truth of what is being reported, the content of news stories. Prinz (2007: 168) argues that morals are emotional expressions which do not track external, objective characteristics of reality:

'Morals are not objective features of the world in the way that, say lions and tigers and bears might be. They come from us'.

This formulation breaks the locked-in dichotomy of political versus objective thinking and admits exploration of sameness as well as difference between the two, an intersubjectivity rather than subject/object paradigm. Compassion is understood then as intersubjective, between inner and outer, individual and social. Furthermore, Prinz claims that people's predispositions to the rightness or wrongness of an act are culturally dependent:

'If moral judgments were based on something other than emotions – something like reason or observation – we would expect more moral

convergence cross-culturally. Reason and observation lead to convergence over time. Cross-culturally there is staggering divergence in moral values'. (Prinz, 2006: 33)

This argument fits the notion, mapped at the end of the previous chapter, of trauma being not only a subjective but also a cultural phenomenon. Given Prinz's argument that morality is underpinned by emotion, how then do foreign correspondents contend with war environments where the emotional coordinates of morality are different from peacetime, where the very cultural foundations of morality and emotion are sometimes in violent opposition? How does it affect foreign correspondents' agency? Part of the answer provided so far, of course, is the deployment of unconscious 'strange' subjectivity or the compassionate, participatory, identificatory approach.

One argument put forward with regard to journalism and ethics concerns the cultural and spatial relations between Western foreign correspondents and conflicts taking place outside of the West. It posits that it is easier to be objective about foreign cultural difference than one's own culture that is internally naturalized as familiarity and sameness. In other words, one is unconsciously attached to one's own home and cannot stand back from it:

'It is relatively easy for journalists based in liberal democratic countries to be objective about unsavoury military dictators in other parts of the world, but objectivity does not come so easily when the unsavoury character is your own boss'. (Belsey, A. in Kieran, M. (ed.), 1998: 12-13)

This theory corroborates the experiences of BBC journalists reporting the IRA bombings in the 1980s (indirectly through Allan Little's voice) and Fergal Keane's experience of reporting the 7/7/05 London bombings. A contemporary case in point is the recently deposed (2011) president of Egypt, Hosni Mubarak. He is framed in mainstream British news as a dictator, but there is (little) mention that he was a dictator receiving economic and political backing by the West. And, unfortunately, the same problematic applies to the mediated personas of figures such as Osama Bin Laden, Saddam Hussein, Robert Mugabe, even Nelson Mandela,

and so on. To frame these leaders as friends of the West would presumably shatter the illusion of objectivity because objectivity requires distance, space between 'them' and 'us'. In other words, objectivity is good at 'othering' foreignness but it does so at the expense of any recognition that it is a system that has cultural and political roots, which may have limited scope in its universal application. Or, at least, the danger is that objectivity does not know its own boundary and admits no human fallibility.

Fisk used an interesting analogy or metaphor for a good approach to emotional engagement with people who are suffering in a conflict, which I took up as one of the interview questions (13):

A doctor who, I'm not comparing journalism with medicine, but a doctor who has to deal with someone who has been terribly wounded in a bomb doesn't stand in the operation room weeping. He tries to save the person. When I see the most terribly wounded or murdered or amputated people, I want to get the story of what happened to them, the injustice, the shame, the outrage.

Snow had a strong opinion about Fisk's prescription:

Well, I think there are two things here. One is, journalists do cry, I mean, I cry at events. But the question is, to what extent do you need to share that with the viewer? I mean, what you can't do is deny that you've been affected by what you saw, and you are right to write and construct a report that reflects some degree of emotional impact from what you're looking at, and if you don't, you're not doing humanitarian service. If you are denying the emotional impact of an incident then you are leaving out a very, very important dimension.

Well, I don't think that that is a useful parallel, to be honest because the surgeon sometimes does meet the person but often doesn't just deal with

what's in front of him. And whereas I think we have much more context to what we're doing.

Here Snow emphasizes the role of foreign correspondents as providers of rough drafts of history, geopolitical meta-discourses. Snow refers here to a kind of dual journalistic agency comprising a sensory emotional tonality or foreground of what he witnesses as well as a more objective account of the background of an event. This fits the Chouliaraki and Boltanski theoretical models of distant suffering mediation referred to above. Snow's formulation also partly corresponds to Goffman's theory of 'front stage' and 'back stage' human social behaviour (1990). However, according to Goffman, the audience is supposed to see only the 'front stage'. According to Snow, the audience should see both 'front stage' emotional performance and 'back stage' objective context. He takes issue with Fisk's medical analogy because he thinks it favours the former emotional dimension at the expense of the latter more factual one. What Snow seems to be saying here is that what is transpiring under the journalist's nose, so to speak, has to be analysed (by standing back somewhat) to assess whether or not it is consistent with a larger sweep of what is going on in a conflict. What is happening in the immediate sphere may well be a short-lived event whereas a more 'contextual' approach may be able to incorporate a wider time frame, a slower historical process. This conundrum was mapped by Seaton above (5.2).

Fisk and Snow seem to concur on the subject of so-called hotel or parachute journalism, a symptom of industrial demand for real-time, dramatic news as well as a capitalist-driven economic incentive to cut costs in international news reporting. They both believe that such a tendency, a temporal rule of the game, leaves less time for the foreign correspondent to weigh up his/her sensory experience and objective knowledge, often resulting in what Pilger would describe as 'gratuitous' emotion, anchored more in the correspondent's narcissistic ego and facilitating an uncritical, institutional or editorial 'objective' bias. For Fisk,²⁶ you have to have a certain depth of historical and political knowledge to have a moral engagement with victims of imperialism, fascism and fundamentalism, the human casualties of enormously impactful and prolonged historical processes:

²⁶ See Robert Fisk quotation on pp. 105-6.

If you're reporting the slave trade in the eighteenth century, you interview the slaves. You don't give equal time to the slave ship captain. If you're reporting the liberation of a Nazi extermination camp in the Second World War, you talk to the victims, and the snipers you don't give equal time to. When in August 2001 I was very close to a suicide bombing of a pizzeria in Israeli west Jerusalem and I saw an Israeli woman with a table leg sticking through one of her eyes, I didn't give equal time to the Islamic Jihad spokesman. When I was at the Sabra and Shatila Camps massacre between 16th and 18th September 1982, which was carried out by Israel's Lebanese militia allies, I didn't give equal time to the Israeli army spokesman. You know, we have to be moral people. We are moral people, I think.

Fisk chooses to emphasize the moral stakes of reporting conflict, which are underpinned by politics, the politics of time, and emotion.

6.2: Sensory journalism

This chapter will now investigate the journalists' thoughts about compassion when reporting conflict in terms of sensory reporting, boundaries of compassion, hotel or parachute journalism, experience and recognition. The five sub-topics have been chosen because they stand out in both theory and journalistic discourse as areas that enrich the discussion of compassion and complex agency. More importantly, in my view, they all speak to the main problematic of compassion. Sensory reporting is defined as a more bodily and holistic, less dry and intellectually distant experience of conflict and trauma, a feel for the game. Compassion, intrusion and the notional return to trauma revisit some boundaries between compassion, objectivity and trauma. Boundaries are articulations made by journalists of the critical lines they experience and draw in the journalistic field between self and Other, between objectivity and emotion, between themselves and other foreign correspondents (competition), between individual agency and some notion of structure or society. They are self-constituted 'rules of the game',

some institutional, some autonomous. Hotel or parachute journalism are expressions used by journalists and theorists that allude to temporal constraints of foreign correspondent reporting that directly impinge on their complex agency in terms of compassion. Simpson refers to the phenomenon in his latest book:

‘As everyone who has ever done the job can testify, reporting, especially from abroad, isn’t so much a first draft of history as a form of escapology’.
(Simpson, 2010: x)

Experience pertains to identifiable experiences within professional biographies, life narratives that have shaped their practice, including developmental issues, accrued over time and years spent in the professional field. It is worth reminding the reader at this point of Carey’s useful articulation, already deployed in the introductory chapter of this thesis:

‘... journalists do not live in a world of disembodied ideals; they live in a world of practices. These practices not only make the world, they make the journalist. Journalists are constituted in practice. So, the appropriate question is not only what kind of world journalists make but also what kinds of journalists are made in the process’. (Carey, 1989)

Note Carey’s implicit reference to the ideal of objectivity (‘a disembodied ideal’), but which, of course, could also be a reference to compassion. Note also his reference to journalistic agency as a process.

To sum up the threads of this chapter so far, theoretical understandings of foreign correspondence as agoraic discourse, performed primarily for spectators, tend not to problematize objective, political or compassionate agency. The theoretical notion that compassionate reporting that does not lead to social action is inherently unstable, fictional and personal to the journalist, as Boltanski argues, is not reflected in journalistic discourse about compassionate journalism. For objective practitioners, the validity of compassionate emotion, whether it is ‘true’, depends on its being unmanipulative, apolitical and an authentic representation of

the people in the news story. Even to convey compassion, journalistic agency should remain instrumental. 'Political' practitioners, such as Fisk and Pilger, believe compassionate journalism is possible by giving more time to and representing victims of power, a kind of 'decentring' practice and de-instrumentalized agency. There seems to be a split between impartial, objective practitioners who believe you can empathize and be compassionate, without partiality or identification and political practitioners who appear to be more self-conscious that compassionate agency involves a degree of partiality and identification.

One way that my interviewees articulate their approach to reporting war and conflict that attempts to address this ethical dilemma in a more compassionate manner is through the concept of sensory reporting. This is a more visceral, affective, less cerebral and less intellectual response to events, through the journalistic body to the outside and back again. It makes use of a different language to mediate suffering.

The idea of sensory journalism came mainly through the voice of Allan Little. He regards it as an important technique to go against the grain of emotionally disengaged war reporting, a kind of ethical agency or what Tester would call ethical subjectivity; and what O'Kane would call 'compassion'. Michel Serres has theorized the language of the senses in *The Five Senses: A Philosophy of Mingled Bodies* (1998), the thesis of which was originally referred to in his earlier book, *Angels: A Modern Myth* (1995: 71):

'If a revolt is to come, it will have to come from the five senses'.

In *Les Cinq Sens* (1986), he outlines five areas: skin and touch, hearing, taste and smell (together), joy and vision. Vision is argued to be a negative reference point for the other senses because of its detachment, its separation between observer and observed. The notion of sensory journalism implies a more bodily expression of news, incorporating and extending some or all the biological senses of sight, smell, hearing, touch and taste. It is clearly interpretative and subjective, a move away from the objective ideal. The emotion of television foreign correspondents, such as Snow and Hilsum, is usually 'pulled back' (Little's words) in the interest of visual objectivity. This is especially the case for BBC journalists like Simpson, Bowen and

Little, whose complex agencies are simplified and constrained not only by the power of images but also by institutional power.

I would also argue that the reporter's voice plays a role in communicating in a sensory way. Michel Serres makes the following point, borrowing from McLuhan:

'... TV is a cold medium and ... radio is a hot medium. On radio, you are close to a person's voice, and emotions are transferred in a refined way ... It [radio]'s a "fine" medium, very intimate. Someone speaks as if whispering in your ear. Whereas TV is a medium where there must be distance for it to reach you, because it's an "icy" medium, and that is why there isn't this idea of "haunting." That's what the technicians say, it's not my own analysis, I'm just reciting what they say'.²⁷

The above description supports the notion that television as a medium creates more distance and, so, it can enhance objectivity. Serres refers to the power of the radio voice to convey intimacy, at odds with the distance of television where the voice is more of an instrument to accompany 'objective' pictures. It could be argued that, if the televisual voice is not flattened in this fashion, whether intentionally or otherwise, it may become intrusively personal or incongruously political. Keane has been criticized by other journalists such as Melanie Reid of *The Times* for being 'mawkish', a 'self-parody' and 'emoting', for putting too much of himself into his news reports, which may well have something to do with how he uses his voice. When I asked him about this, he responded:

The idea that I invented emotionalism in journalism is flattery. Go and read Hemingway's dispatches. Go back, read Ed Murrow, William Shire, anybody like that. So, I think it's a particularly English response, particularly little English.

Here he makes a cultural argument about different cultural conventions and expectations of use of journalistic emotion. The implicit suggestion could be that

²⁷ <<http://www.nettime.org/Lists-Archives/nettime-l-9711/msg00035.html>>. viewed 22/3/10.

there is a cultural and class association between being a member of the English establishment, in other words, representing power, and regarding an excess of emotion as being a sign of being less refined and not a member of this exclusive class. It is also the voice of the 'male' bourgeoisie that represses 'female' emotion and classifies it as hysteria.

Melanie Reid describes Keane's voices as 'laced with that ineffable despair and weariness'.²⁸ She criticizes a report of the war in Lebanon by Keane in 2006:

'Having driven into the danger zone (in order, naturally, to emote with stranded Lebanese), they then starred in their own drama as one individual was slightly wounded by shrapnel and they had to bundle him into the car and drive off at high speed. Was it brave? More like totally irresponsible. It told us nothing, except that the Israeli forces hit their target zone; and Keane likes getting involved with the story. Both of which facts we might have gleaned already'.

She heavily disapproves of what she calls an 'emoting' style of reporting for the following reasons:

'Of course war is always a human drama as well as a political one, but more than ever the issue is one of coolness and objectivity in the reporting of it. Get the emphasis wrong, and one either sanitizes war or one tips over into a simplistic – and exploitative – form of victim journalism'.²⁹

Reid believes that emoting inevitably leads to partiality:

'When television forsakes classic objective journalism, and starts Keaneing over victims – even if it devotes equal time to both Lebanese and Israelis – inevitably it leaves itself vulnerable to a charge of partiality'.

²⁸ Melanie Reid, 'We all suffer as objectivity is lost', *The Herald*, 1/8/06.

²⁹ Ibid.

Ultimately, this particular journalistic perspective refuses to complicate the theoretical divide between emotion and objectivity. Not only does Reid think that use of journalistic emotion is exclusively personal and political, she also refuses to problematize the use of objectivity except as a gold standard, what Pilger mockingly calls 'nirvana'. At best, this view understands journalistic agency only as instrumental.

Keane now maintains that his lachrymose Irish monotone was, in retrospect, problematic:

'If I had my time over again, I would have worked harder to change the intonation'.³⁰

In *The Human Voice*, Karpf argues that Bill Clinton and Tony Blair's style of public speaking marked a singular change in the history of public life (2006: 231) because they 'feminized' their male public voices to show emotion and empathy (2006: 229). Karpf goes on to refer to Richard Sennett's work on the social psychology of capitalism:

'The modern charismatic leader destroys any distance between his own sentiments and impulses and those of his audience, and so, focusing his followers on his motivations, deflects them from measuring him in terms of his acts'. (Sennett in Karpf, 2006: 231)

This is not to imply that Keane is any better or worse than any other foreign correspondent in using or not using emotion in his work. However, I do want to say that the idea of narrowing the distance between self and audience through use of emotion and the voice as a rhetorical instrument seems to be pertinent here as a technique for engaging viewers and using empathy. Also, Keane is not a politician as such but does have a political role to play in mediating political and military conflict, that is political boundaries between his perceived emotional self and 'others'.

³⁰ Interview by Elizabeth Grice, *The Telegraph*, 22/4/10.

I asked Allan Little, in the light of a discussion about objectivity, whether journalistic emotionality could be a more direct, 'authentic', less representational form of experience that conveys what it feels like to be there in the place where the journalist is reporting:

Well, we are there to be a conduit for other people's authentic emotional responses. I don't think it's any of our business to have authentic emotional responses of our own. Not really. And be there as a conduit and in order to be a conduit for the authentic emotional responses of people whose lives are actually affected by what's going on, you have to have a certain emotional fine tuning of your own.

This is an interesting statement because of the ambiguity it shows between its beginning and end. On the one hand, he stipulates a clear boundary between his own emotions and 'other people's emotional responses' but, on the other, he attends to his own emotion in order to convey the emotion of others. Little's 'fine tuning' is, perhaps, an acknowledgement of how one's own experience of suffering may help one to recognize and attune to others' suffering. The notion of 'fine tuning' is similar to O'Kane's position of 'objective tools' and 'subjective skills' (see 4.2). It is a deployment deriving from personal experience in the professional, public, 'objective' domain. Bowen takes a similar position:

The thing is anger and emotion probably have a place, but it has to be calibrated. What you can't do as a reporter, I think, is give the impression that you're out of control, that you've somehow lost your analytical faculties.

I asked Little if he agreed that in order to read someone else's emotion you have to engage your own emotion:

That's true. Yes.

I then asked him if reading other people's emotions is a kind of refraction of the self:

Yes, but I'm not really interested in whether the reporter is grief-stricken. I'm not interested in that; or terrified. But I'm interested in his or her ability to convey the emotional reactions of those whose lives are affected.

For Little, appropriate use of emotion is a question of relaying the authentic emotional response of the subjects of the report (whilst acknowledging the use of his own emotional '*fine tuning*'). Any insertion of the journalist's own emotional response that stands out from the authentic emotional response of the subjects is deemed undesirable and intrusive. But given that Little believes that emotions are culturally dependent (for example, dependent on popular British national culture in the case of reporting the IRA bombings in the 1980s), he does not seem to be concerned about having a potential blind spot in being able to read 'authentically' foreign (cultural) subjects' emotions.

Pilger believes unreservedly that any dependence a foreign correspondent has on an institution such as the BBC is likely to detract from the potential veracity of the said journalist's reports as well as the 'reality' of his/her emotion. This is because, as he points out, all institutions have vested political interests. He sees BBC 'objectivity' as a false distance between journalist and subject matter so that, unless the journalist puts himself on the same level as the subjects, s/he cannot authentically represent the subjects' emotions. From this, one would expect objective and sensory modes of journalism to be at odds with each other. Little gives a personal and professional example of what he calls 'on the ground', 'sensory' journalism:

I try to tell it in a sensory way. If you read my dispatch from the bunker bombing in 1991, that's pretty sensory. It's told very straight, but it's very clear. You know, basically, we went there and I went back to my hotel room having seen 400 bodies being pulled out of the smoking ruins, and I thought I'm going to write what I've seen. And I wanted to have a sensory effect.

My friend Chris Gunness, who now works for the UN, was at that time the UN correspondent for the BBC and I reported that at about 10 a.m. on Radio Four. By the time they all woke up in New York, there were transcripts of my report being circulated around the Security Council. Chris said, I bumped in to one coalition diplomat who said, 'Fuck, now we're in trouble!' Have you read this? He said he must have bumped into half a dozen.

So, 'sensory' is connected, in Little's view, to being an 'emotional conduit' through 'fine tuning' his own emotion. I asked Little if his 'sensory' report was something he was proud of:

Yes, not because I was trying to stop the war. But I did want people to know what it was like on the ground.

This is a clear example of the objectivity of agency, to which Little subscribes.

In another example, Robin Sloan of the Poynter Institute interviewed reporter Chris Hedges, winner of the 2001 Pulitzer Prize for international reporting on war. Hedges (2003) talks about the inexperience of most of the reporters covering war, particularly the Vietnam and Iraq war and how the press tends to report the war as a 'mythic narrative' that creates heroes, which, in turn, boosts ratings and sells newspapers.

'In wartime, we need the hero, we need the evil enemy, we need the hometown boy, we need the story of pathos. We fill the slots on the stage to fit the myth. And that's part of the danger, I think'.

'We have seen, I think Vietnam was a good example of, you know, eventually it was impossible for the press to report on Vietnam as a mythic narrative. They reported on it in a sensory way. Once that veil of myth is pulled aside, and people see war – especially modern war – for what it is,

which is organized, very impersonal industrial slaughter, it becomes pretty unpalatable’.

Hedges also makes an interesting observation about how the state ‘hijacks the language in time of war ... and the press parrots it back to us’. I asked Little whether his experience of reporting the 1991 Gulf War was an attempt to question the mythic narrative of international journalism and politics:

Yes, if that’s what he [Chris Hedges] means by that. But then I had a mythic narrative of my own going on. You know, maybe I had this naïve thing about, ‘I’ll get the truth out if it’s the last thing’. Mr Valiant Truth. That’s a mythic narrative as well.

A 1991 dispatch seems to stand out for Little because he felt compelled to report in a more sensory way an event that potentially constituted a war crime. As mentioned above in the context of history and emotion (4.2):

We are a value-based industry. We value our own existence. We value our work. We value the foundations on which it’s built, and these come out of the kind of liberal societies that grew up on both sides of the north Atlantic in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. It’s rooted in that cultural soil. To say you can be neutral about that, I am not completely neutral about the BBC. I love the BBC. I believe in it. I believe in its values. I think they’re good. I think they are a force for good the world.

It is noteworthy that his emotional assessment of himself is self-critical in his self-characterization as ‘Mr Valiant Truth’. This seems to represent his internal zone that borders self-censorship, where the non-journalistic self is regarded as intrusive and inappropriate, venturing dangerously from the ‘objective’ zone into the ‘polemical’ (Little’s word) one. Little also delinks sensory journalism from ‘phony’ reporting:

Only if it’s well done because, as we’ve already established in this conversation, some people try to do it and it falls flat, it goes over the top

or it sounds phony and then it's counter-productive. It has the opposite effect to the one it's intended to convey. If you're going to use emotion, which I think you should, to convey the emotional impact on the ground, because you want it to be sensory, you've got to be attuned. You've got to be emotionally responsible yourself, and understand the emotional response from the people who are listening or watching you. You can't switch it on like an actor. It's got to be real. And the way to make it real is to pull yourself right back from it.

Here, Little makes it clear that, for him, it is a question of fine-tuning emotion to the audience, not the subject of the story.

To sum up, for objective journalists, such as Little, sensory journalism can never be political or subjective. Even an event that is allegedly a war crime can only be reported graphically and sensorily. Keane stands out especially for his vocal sensory ability to use a lachrymose 'feminine' tone that is good for engaging audiences but, arguably, disrupts objectivity. On the other hand, for Pilger and Hedges, sensory journalism de-instrumentalizes the journalist, enabling him to puncture mythic political narratives, such as the 'liberation' of Vietnam or the War on Terror, to consciously and compassionately attach to, identify with, the victims of war and conflict.

Little had to stop reporting from Bosnia in the 1990s because he felt that his role there had become 'meretricious':

I was glad to leave Bosnia in the end. I think I said this to you last time, that I started to find, and feel that I couldn't look certain people in the eye because I felt rather ashamed. I felt tainted by a kind of reflected shame. And it was good for me to leave. So, yes, I think those things are connected in the reasons why I felt bound up with shame to do with what was going on in my own head, I am sure. And that had a knock-on effect in terms of how much I wanted to interact with the people there.

You end up feeling meretricious. You end up feeling that you've used people. So, I think that's an occupational hazard.

Without a professional role, without technological back-up, being too close to a conflict can be and feel dangerous. The human voyeur is temporarily masked by the role of being a professional witness. Jean Seaton recounts a comparable experience of a Bosnian frontline journalist (2005: 282):

‘In my desire to learn of war I sought the cloak of anonymity in the community. I had ended up not wanting to even carry cameras, let alone use them. Yet it was impossible to integrate totally ...The words “get your camera” re-identified me as the outsider I was. And if I could not accept that status, if I could not use my cameras, then I should not be there. I could not stay on and feed off the misery of people just to “see a war”. I had to use it’.

In Little’s case, maybe he felt more meretricious as the news cycle demand for reports from Bosnia became less. Since there was less demand to record, inevitably, he was moving back across the boundary of being a professional recorder, where closeness is legitimated by purpose, because he is always also an ordinary observer. It even seems that the extended period of years that Little spent in Bosnia transformed his relationship with the Bosnian people, the journalistic subjects, in such a way that he lost his comfortable ‘objective’ distance from a degree of suffering and violence that he had never witnessed before. This reveals an important boundary for a BBC foreign correspondent between institutional and non-institutional use of emotion, where the ‘objective’ journalist is constrained more by a national and institutional remit. What is fascinating about Little’s Bosnian experience is how it dovetails experience of trauma and compassion. In his own words, it represents the most traumatic episode in his journalistic career. Maybe this was because he refused, consciously or otherwise, to give in to compassion fatigue. His experience and training had not equipped him to deal with the situation, which forced him to rely on subjective deployment of compassion. This was Little’s boundary. What also emerges out of Little’s experience is, as mentioned in the previous chapter, the importance of time. It seems that Little had never

spent so long in one place before. Little's four-year Bosnian experience, therefore, demonstrates a temporal boundary.

Seaton (2005: 200) makes the point that journalists, especially foreign correspondents who report conflict and trauma, experience a moral disjuncture between their private and professional lives:

'Journalists, good and bad, are also moral travellers between moral worlds. They go from where you must not kill people to where you have to'.

Was this the case with Little's experience in Bosnia, such that the longer he lived in Bosnia, the more his vision and compartmentalization of these two 'moral' worlds became blurred? Like Keane or O'Kane, Loyd in Bosnia found himself ill-equipped emotionally to operate professionally in this relatively atrocious post-Cold War environment, which constituted a kind of trauma (see Chapter Five). Little's experience can also be interpreted as an example of a journalistic intrusion akin to O'Kane's idea of 'kidnapping pain' and Keane's 'bleed-through' where the routine conventional division between self and Other becomes compromised. Bosnia certainly brought out in Little a human empathy also alluded to by Fisk and Pilger. Little's Bosnian experience can be seen as a powerful affective intrusion into his professional and personal identity, an entanglement, somewhat traumatic. The notion of intrusion was also taken up by Loyd who expressed a few qualms similar to Little:

You know, one intrudes deeply as a journalist. One often intrudes at a point in people's lives at which they are most vulnerable and least able to make the decision as to whether they want intrusion or not.

I then asked him if it was a question of journalistic discretion about if or when to exploit these moments:

Yes. Also, it's part of the crap one carries as a war reporter, or reporter in war. There are some things one has to do in order to do the job well, which

are not easy and not nice, and can actually cause some hurt. And you just as a human being try and work it out as best you can.

Compared to Little, Loyd appears to have less reservation about intrusion leading to meretriciousness. He pinpoints egotism as an example of undesirable intrusion, to which he claims he was more vulnerable in the earlier part of his journalistic career. I take up this point again below and in Chapter Seven:

... you've got to watch your ego in it because it's very corrupting, particularly as a newspaper journalist, once you start getting patted on the back by your editor or you win an award or whatever.

Robertson experienced a 'burn out' moment in Darfur:

What I'm personally more afraid of is, perhaps, what's more likely to fall under the heading of 'burn out' because of not feeling enough of what's going on around me to communicate it properly. I was in Darfur recently and there's obviously suffering on a big scale but I'm not being brought to my knees by it. And I'm thinking, should I be brought to my knees by it? Am I out of touch with what's really good and really bad? I understand and I hear what they're saying, but I'm honestly trying to think here ...

Later in the interview, when I asked him about efficacy of an outsider identity as a foreign correspondent, Robertson speculated on an answer to his self-posed question above:

I've never thought it through that being an outsider allows you to have an emotional detachment. Maybe, that's what I was experiencing an extreme form of that in Darfur.

The insightful connection that Robertson makes above is a form of compassion fatigue, arguably trauma, but what is fascinating is the way he understands this process as a positive deployment of subjectivity, of having a predisposition to stand back, be an outsider.

Pilger believes institutional journalism is a kind of unethical intrusion into the independence of the journalistic self. It derives from culture and training and leads to self-censorship and not 'real' compassionate and emotional engagement with local people on the ground:

The last British war that was reported without censorship was the Crimea. And my hero, William Howard Russell, if you read Russell's diaries, used plenty of emotion, plenty of facts. He got a few things wrong, but he was independent-minded. And nothing has changed. That should be the journalist today. Now, despite the therapists and the various others, the flak jackets that are now state of the art, and all that, the essence of journalism has not changed. I put together an anthology, which you may know about. In there are people who I think have honoured that. And I call them honourable exceptions because the system is such that it cranks out, the media colleges are to blame as any for this, it cranks out journalists who work to a system, not to a basic independence of mind.

The differentiation that Pilger makes between systematic institutional journalists and non-systematic independent ones in favour of the latter is an interesting one. He qualifies it by adding later in the interview that his non-'systematic' method of journalistic engagement was garnered from journalistic experience rather than 'media colleges':

We are all shaped by our upbringing, we're shaped by our parents, the influences. I would think most of mine are shaped by my reporting experience. That's why I'm always interested to ask people, 'Well, what's my ideology?' I think my 'ideology' is one that has developed over many years of seeing how the world works and how people live. And I think that's been, probably, and I'm not sure about this, I think that's probably been the

greatest influence on me that, from a very young age [nineteen], I started travelling as a reporter and I've always been a reporter. And off the deep end, if you like, from a comfortable life in a Western country to seeing how most of humanity lives. That's my experience and, I suppose, getting back to your original theme of emotion in reporting, I suppose that's where I learned the place of emotion in reporting.

Pilger's deployment of subjectivity seems to stem from an almost traumatic disjuncture between his own cloistered upbringing in a Western country and the lives he began to see people leading outside the West. From this personal historical moment flows his compassionate agency. One wonders how he is able to make a separation between pre- professional and professional experience, which, according to him, certain other peers cannot do.

Pilger implies that institutional journalism is more prone to compassion fatigue through its distance and 'template' journalism, a point supported both by Moeller and Alagiah (see 2.5). Pilger acknowledges that an independent journalist, his ideal self-image, develops a 'system' of emotional engagement as he works, and usually early in his career. Pilger believes that the prescription for good journalism is 'ground up', not 'top down' (an idea which was formalized by one of Pilger's journalistic role-models, Martha Gelhorn):

Most mainstream news reporting is done from the top down and, in using that description, I quote Martha Gellhorn who used the idea of a telescope: you look up and you don't look down. Most news reporting sees the movement of people, human beings, in whatever situation, through a telescope provided by many things, provided by their employers, by their education, by their internalizing of so much of the undeclared rules of how we're meant to perceive the world, so that much of it is subliminal. That's the way they see things.

Pilger's prescription is also a spatial one, but rather different from objectivity because it advocates distance from powerful institutions, primarily Western states, corporations and media institutions. What Pilger and BBC

correspondents such as Simpson, Keane, Little and Bowen share is an assumed border or boundary between institutional agency and individual agency. But they configure themselves on different sides of this demarcation. The BBC approach advocates distance from event, from the subjects of the story, distance from journalistic agency, whereas Pilger advocates proximity to the human subjects of the story. He says that foreign correspondents should 'get down on the ground' and identify with the relatively weaker political groups, the people:

Well, for one thing, that journalist will be reporting from the ground up, not from the top down. He or she will be reporting from a literally humane standpoint. He will be reporting what the people on the ground are doing, feeling and experiencing, suffering. He will be reporting that. He will not be reporting their experience, their suffering through the prism of those who have authority over them. That's very important.

This statement appears to resonate with Peters' theoretical prescription (as well as with Little's example of 'sensory' reporting) above:

'The objective witness is very different from the survivor, whose witness lies in mortal engagement with the story told'. (Peters in Frosh and Pinchevski (eds), 2009: 33)

And yet Pilger is not a survivor. He has not experienced conflict and suffering first-hand as a foreign correspondent since 1986, when he stopped working for *The Daily Mirror*. Since that time he has made many documentaries in conflict zones, but not with the same pressures and deadlines as an institutional foreign correspondent. Maybe he just tries to empty himself out of the kind of 'baggage' he sees institutional journalists carrying around. His philosophy tends to be Levinasian in its adherence to and respect for the Other, but his denial of difference between self and Other is not. Pinchevski describes Levinasian philosophy of ethics as follows:

‘Collapsing the difference between self and Other into a common denominator entails compromising the Other’s alterity, his or her radical difference, and ultimately forbids regarding another as an Other’.
(Pinchevski, 2005: 70)

From a Levinasian point of view, it would seem that the Other is unrepresentable and can only truly represent itself. What Peters claims is that a survivor has a physical investment, a primitive interest in ‘observing’ danger to try to survive, whereas an objective correspondent has a disembodied engagement with conflict which is ‘dull as the microscope to human concerns or consequences’ (Peters in Frosh and Pinchevski (eds), 2009: 32-4). This is maybe an important difference between an independent and an institutional journalist. An independent journalist is more physically and emotionally exposed to conflict whereas an institutional one, and indeed an embedded one, knows s/he has a protective distance, an escape route, if you like, which constrains identification with sufferers. Pilger’s ‘bottom up’ approach to reporting others’ emotion is one in which he feels he can recognize the emotional mood of a crowd and then credibly represent it through spoken or written language and/or audiovisually. One could almost say that he fine-tunes his emotional awareness to people’s suffering.

Pilger commented on a film by Guzman, *The Battle of Chile*, that ‘Guzman ensures we are not merely witnesses; we share the experience’. I asked Pilger if this was a strong statement on some sort of emotional intent on behalf of the filmmaker, which carries through into his journalism. He answered:

What I was referring to there was his filming style. The Battle of Chile was shot handheld and the cameraperson stayed within the crowds. So, you were with people and it had that dimension of being very much part of the – for instance, the street demonstrations. And there was one scene in that film where, not long before Allende was overthrown, most of his supporters, his constituents and the unions, all those who had certain grievances but were prepared to put them aside in order to support him, marched through Santiago. And I thought that was an extremely emotional sequence.

He is talking here about capturing the potency of emotional, unfolding human experience, history. I then ask him how much he attributed the emotion of the film to the camera positioning:

I think I attribute it to the power of emotion of people, the heartfelt sense, the heartfelt support for Allende that came through clear and, with the mantra, 'Allende! Allende! The people are with you', when you knew what was coming. It was very emotional because it was an unarmed population saying to a generally popular leader that they supported him, that many of them must have known that the end was coming. That's a very emotional set of circumstances and I found my own reaction to it quite emotional and I wanted to use that sequence in my last film, but we just couldn't fit it in. It didn't work.

Pilger does not problematize the notion of the group or the 'people'. In this case, he is talking very much about a political emotional force rather than a universal emotional discourse of suffering, an event caught in time. This may even be a good Western liberal bias, such as articulated by Little, but a political bias nonetheless. For Pilger, most mainstream foreign correspondent reporting, such as Allan Little's, is guilty of political bias leading to 'false' emotion:

Well, there's a political constraint because most Western reporting sees the world in terms of its usefulness, and they don't like to say that, of course, they're very defensive usually about agreeing to that, but that's what it is. The Western reporters and media which dominate the world penetrate other societies with its view of the world, its reporting is all-powerful. So when a Western reporter arrives, the baggage that he or she drags along is huge. And it comes with, generally speaking, and there are many honourable exceptions for this, certain places are reported in a certain way because the consensus, I would say the establishment consensus in the country from which they've come, usually the United States or Britain or Europe, is that this country ought to be seen in this particular way, its

leaders are either acceptable or unacceptable, that it has a good dictator or a bad dictator, or its victims are worthy or they're not worthy.

Pilger connects this mainstream tendency to report 'top down' with emotional denial:

Now those journalists, you'll often hear them speak about, 'You mustn't let emotion enter your reporting'. What they're really saying is: 'we mustn't really get down on the ground'.

He believes that so-called objective reporting, including all BBC reporting, is either emotionless or prone to falsity, artificiality, 'gratuitousness', being manufactured and too personal; personal in the sense, maybe, that journalistic emotion becomes a kind of narcissistic 'consensus' that has already categorized and evaluated what it is reporting, so casts a false projection on what it pretends to see. Pilger's ethical stance complies with Pinchevski's theory:

'Constituted upon likeness and similitude, it runs the risk of seeing Others as variations of oneself, and at the most extreme, as one's own reflection. Communication understood in this way offers little more than a constant déjà vu'. (Pinchevski, 2005: 69)

By 'it', Pinchevski means 'any definition of communication that forecloses the difference between self and Other' (ibid.: 69).

Pilger is not against emotion per se but use of emotion must be a deployment of the self towards the Other. With regard to his own work, he is confident that he can differentiate 'gratuitous' from 'authentic' emotion:

You can tell that very easily. I try to take out of all my work this gratuitous emotion. If it's there, it's there because it was significant as far as I was

concerned, or it was significant as far as the situation that I was reporting was concerned.

To sum up, the compassionate boundary between self and Other is similar for both political and objective foreign correspondents. Both groups believe in ‘instrumentalizing’ the self to act as a conduit for the authentic emotion of survivors in the news story. In terms of compassion fatigue, there is clear disagreement between those who believe that objectivity flattens the agency of the journalist and those who argue that too much ‘intimate’ emotional engagement leads to compassion fatigue. In Little’s Bosnian case, the boundary that he crossed was an intimate one, as well as a temporal one.

6.3: Parachute journalism

In the next section, I turn to the phenomenon of parachute journalism (see Hess, 1994; Hamilton and Jenner, 2004; Palmer and Fontan, 2007; Volkmer, 2008). At the end of Chapter Four, I talked about the metaphorical qualities of the phrase ‘embedded’ journalism and argued that the metaphor can arguably be extended to institutional, ‘objective’ journalism, in general. Taking Afghanistan and Iraq as examples, it seems that the embedding of journalists there, the ‘deneutralizing’ of the practice, is making it much more dangerous for unembedded, independent foreign correspondents. According to Hoskins and O’Loughlin (2011: 73):

‘... reporters may spend less time in the zone of conflict or disaster than once was the case. Instead of living there for weeks, months or even years and acquiring expertise and fluency in local languages, reporters today can be flown to a ‘hot spot’ from where, using mobile technologies, they can film, edit and disseminate their report within hours before flying back’.

So, as well as the kind of spatial quarantining that embedding journalism entails, parachute journalism presents temporal constraint and, maybe, compassionate

constraints as well. It refers to the negative connotations, unethical ones, I would argue, of journalists keeping a distance from stories unfolding in conflict zones both physically and temporally. Fisk refers to the phenomenon, using Iraq as an example, as follows:

“‘Hotel journalism’ is the only phrase for it. More and more Western reporters in Baghdad are reporting from their hotels rather than the streets of Iraq’s towns and cities’. (Fisk, 2005)

Parachute journalism is a derogatory reference to the practice of dropping journalists into an area to report on a story of which the reporter has little knowledge or experience. The lack of knowledge and tight deadlines often result in inaccurate or distorted news reports, especially during breaking news (Ricchiardi, 1997). As opposed to expert foreign correspondents who might live in the locale, British news organizations increasingly send (metaphorically by ‘parachute’) either general assignment reporters or well-known celebrity journalists into unfamiliar areas. This is why Fisk’s long-term residence in Beirut is the exception, rather than the rule. Foreign correspondents today are accustomed to spending no longer than a few days in one place, which constrains the time that they have to make personal, subjective emotional investment in the places and people they are reporting.

Little made the following point about the journalism of Bernard Henri-Levy:

He came to Sarajevo once and he was no sooner there than he was gone again. And he wrote a book about it. And we all thought its title should be ‘Deux Heures in Sarajevo’. I don’t intend to be a war reporter. I never have. Not because its demeaning, but it’s a bit naff really, it’s building your own mythic narrative.

Jeremy Bowen had clear reservations about parachute journalism:

It’s very different being a reporter where you are parachuted into a place which you don’t know anything about to being in a place that you know a

lot about. Even if you are just parachuted in, the fact is that you know it. So, I think that's a strong argument for training and experience and placing people in places where they get to know it. You know, I've lived in the Middle East, for example.

But Bowen also maintains that a 'human response' takes no time at all:

I think on the level I was talking about earlier, about human reaction, human response to common problems, then I don't think it takes any time.

Fergal Keane made the following observation on the matter, based on his own experience:

I went in [to Sudan] for forty-eight hours and came out and had the starving children and all of that, and I was wrong. I was wrong because I didn't have enough context in it. I was wrong because I relied on these powerfully emotive images to carry the story. And it was a kind of betrayal of my own intelligence. I knew more about Africa than that. I'd been covering it for twenty-five years. When I say that in the last number of years I've changed and tried to be more kind of forensic, of course there's a place for emotion, we're emotional beings, most of the conflicts of the world are fuelled by people's emotions, and you have to recognize that and realize that it's in yourself. If you look at the documentaries I've done in the last few years for Panorama, they're incredibly forensic – one, the investigation of Sharon and the massacre at Sabra and Shatila, and an investigation of Darfur last year. Go and look at the one of Darfur last year because that's the kind of journalism where I feel I'm now at. So, do me a favour, it's called Darfur, Never Again.

So, for Bowen and Keane, it is gleaning factual and contextual information that takes time. Keane brings out here the superficiality of televisual images. He implies that although pictures by themselves have emotional tenor and can be powerfully

emotive, on a non-emotional level, this does not provide enough evidential information and context. It's a kind of one-dimensional emotionality that flattens all stories of suffering in the developing world into oneness. The affective dimension of the reporting should not become instrumentally flat and unresponsive to the affective dimension of the story itself.

Snow also talks about images, televisual technology and de-emotionalization which, like Keane, he attributes not only to technology but also to use of time:

You can have a graphic sequence on ITV or whatever in which a tear rolls down her cheek, a woman looks at the camera and a man is carrying a coffin – all these very fast images, but they're very beautifully treated, that's the thing, and it almost looks of advertising quality. But, curiously enough, it is a rather cold treatment, actually, because you never really get to know why the woman is crying, it's all too fast.

Funnily enough, I think ITV have de-emotionalized – I think they've de-emotionalized the product because they don't invest enough time in it. Or enough – you know, they're so into gizmos and using the technology to the limits, and the rest of it – you know, live from here, or being able to use a graphic system that makes someone in a green room look like they're standing on the moon, you know, this is all very brilliant, but it actually de-emotionalizes.

Snow, with prompting, agreed that BBC news was also 'de-emotionalized', but not Channel Four News. I asked him why:

Because we [Channel Four] have time. It's a big time thing. I mean, if you are condensing the tsunami [Asian tsunami, 2005] into a minute-fifteen, we'll be doing it in six or seven minutes, I mean, that is a rather different business.

This idea of 'de-emotionalization' usefully corresponds to Pilger's notion of 'real' versus 'manufactured' emotion. He argues that:

And so much emotion in reporting, particularly broadcast reporting, is manufactured.

I don't like sentimentality. And I don't like it in reporting.

I don't like gratuitous emotion. I don't like personal emotion, if it is gratuitous.

To sum up, parachute or hotel journalism, like embedded reporting, is often to the detriment of sensory, physical, up-close reporting with people engaged in conflict. Parachute/hotel journalism lends itself to a more dislocated objective approach where journalistic agency is most distant, physically and emotionally, from the subjects of the report. The combination of this constraint and the time constraint may sometimes lead to a use of emotion by a foreign correspondent that is not 'finely tuned', not 'humanitarian', somewhat alienated. Too little time spent in a zone of conflict or disaster that is being reported tends to result in less compassionate agency, more 'false' emotion, 'template' journalism and compassion fatigue.

6.4: Experience

Experience, in philosophical terms, is associated with notions of process, phenomenology and subjectivity, which are far too large for this project to enter into in any depth. I want to draw on experience as human life development and address some of the issues that arose in the interviews with journalists. These include experience and age, narcissism, wisdom or maturity, and how being a parent affects the journalist's ability to be compassionate. In other words, having

talked about complex agency as the deployment of subjectivity, I now want to address complex agency as the deployment of subjective experience.

On the subject of experience, Simpson observed:

It's easy for me because I'm kind of old enough to be the fathers of most of the people who are my editors nowadays. They get younger, I get older. And it's more difficult, I suppose, to say 'no' to some grumpy old bastard at the other end of the line than it is to somebody in his or her first job, or something like that.

Experience has, then, made Simpson more authoritative and less compromising. There is also the sense from him that he has earned his slightly superior status, so does not need to prove his worth, like younger correspondents might feel they do.

In my interview with him, Keane claimed that he had become less emotional 'over the last few years':

I think growing a bit older, becoming more settled within myself. I'm certainly less sanctimonious, more inclined to not make allowances for people who do awful things but more inclined to look for the reasons why things happen.

Keane identifies two useful concurrent strands that emerge from his personal and professional experience of being a foreign correspondent between 1994 and 1999, and makes a link between his turbulent personal life and how his reporting was affected. Firstly, he claims that his use of emotion had become formulaic, what Snow might call 'having a good wallow'. Secondly, he maintains that his reporting had lost 'context'. This is reminiscent of Little's 'fine tuning' and O'Kane's objective tools and subjective skills, negotiating the fine line between self and Other, subjectivity and objectivity that is precariously bridged by emotion. It is noteworthy that Keane mentions a documentary that he made for BBC Panorama called *Darfur, Never Again* as a redress of his 'parachute' journalism in Africa, as a more up-to-date example of his best work so far, where his use of emotion is less formulaic,

less rushed and more 'forensic'. Clearly documentary is a different medium than news and involves the benefit of more time. As he explained:

I'm certainly not as driven. If I were as driven as I was, I would be out in Iraq digging away, trying to get at what's happened in Fallujah. So, to that extent, I'm not as good a journalist. However, there are some compensations and I take more time to do things now. Ten years ago, would I have taken more time to do the Darfur investigation I did last year? No, I wouldn't.

Keane is acknowledging a waning of the emotional maelstrom and adrenaline rush that he experienced in earlier years. This slowing down of practice, this decline of narcissism is more desirably deployed outside of broadcast news, in documentaries and books. For Keane, the transition or bridge from journalism to documentary is the development of an investigative, 'forensic' approach.

Maggie O'Kane too, now works exclusively in documentary production, and John Pilger has also progressed professionally from foreign correspondent to documentary filmmaker and investigative journalist. On the other hand, Keane still maintains that his work during the early 1990s was 'vivid and powerful':

I think it's possible, I can only put it this way: do I think I'm a better journalist now than I was when I was unaware, if you like, of trauma, whether caused by childhood or war? I would say, 'yes'. I would definitely say 'yes'. And yet I know that the sort of genocide I did in South Africa, during the transition period for Radio Four, my reporting of the Rwandan genocide, I doubt I'll ever equal it in terms of its vividness and power. I very much doubt it.

This statement is a strong avowal of the role of the affective self in experiencing and representing conflict.

Little has a different view to Keane on the overlapping of personal and professional biography:

I still think there's no direct connection between a vulnerability to post-traumatic condition and the likelihood that you will use emotion in your reporting.

I know someone who is being treated for PTSD at the moment. And if you see him on television, he's a very straight man. He doesn't get at all emotional. He's very straight. He doesn't go down the Fergal Keane / Allan Little road at all.

It is interesting that Little conflates his type of journalism with Keane because there are clearly differences in how they understand their practice. In psychoanalytic terms, 'not getting emotional at all' but experiencing trauma is a relatively early stage of the coming to consciousness of mental pain. Keane, someone who has been processing trauma all his adult life, unlike Little, talks about 'bleed-through', journalistic moments when his own self, his own mythic narrative, has, in his view, inappropriately leaked into the story. I asked him if, during his dark period around Rwanda, he felt his personal story had crossed over into his public work:

Without a shadow of a doubt. And that doesn't invalidate all the work that I did at the time but I can see particular examples. You know, Sudan was an example, and I'm sure there are others where there was what I call a 'bleed-through'.

But Keane believes that he and his peers have lost touch with the reality of the outside world. He perceives that there is a lack of political acumen among his BBC peers:

Come back to what I said to you earlier: it's simply doing our job. This is huge. Why aren't we asking questions? It's the elephant in the sitting room. It's not about becoming a cheerleader for the anti-war cause. Absolutely not. It's simply saying what's happening; some basic questions. How many

people are dying and why? What are the promises you made? It's really simple stuff, you know.

Keane's moral position, as a BBC institutional journalist, is more critical than Simpson and Little. He comes close to Pilger's view on the use of emotion to evade political analysis:

I'm speaking of emotional reporting that highlights tragedy that doesn't even begin to suggest why this tragedy has happened because, if they suggest that, then it may raise very embarrassing and unpalatable questions – about power. So often emotion is used to mask that and I'm very much opposed to that.

Little's moral position is a relatively liberal progressive one. He believes that the BBC and its values are a force for good in the world. He compartmentalizes emotion and politics. He (and Simpson) do not want to accept that the BBC's 'objective' approach, 'pulling yourself right back' from the subject-matter, is a position of power, a political position, that cannot occupy the moral high ground. This is why he is so at odds with practitioners like Pilger and Fisk.

On the subject of emotion and experience, I asked Little for his opinion about an incident that involved Robert Fisk in 2001, when he was almost killed in Afghanistan by a mob of angry Afghans. What stands out about the incident, for me, is the way Fisk later reported the event in neutral language, trying to convey the fact that the Afghan mob had every right to want to take his life in the historical light of Western incursions into their country and culture. In a way, the ascendant emotion in Fisk's reporting of this incident was guilt. I asked Little if he identified at all with Fisk's position on Middle Eastern politics:

Yes, I find it very puzzling because I am appalled that any innocent person should be killed in retribution for the crimes of others, appalled.

However, he added:

I think he's mixing two things up. I think it's simply wrong to punish an innocent person for a crime committed by someone else, even by very, very upset traumatized people. It's still wrong.

I suggested that was it not the case that Fisk was seeing a bigger picture of the West:

So that means he thinks that a cycle of vengeance and counter-vengeance is acceptable behaviour? No. I don't think that's striving to be neutral. I think that's a highly partisan position.

What is striking about Little's and Fisk's oppositional ethical understandings here is that Fisk is arguably acting as an authentic emotional conduit condoned by Little but Little maintains that this is a 'partisan', unobjective approach; that Fisk's 'fine tuning' is amiss. From Fisk's perspective, he is not trying to be objective, but moral. Little believes that the professional integrity of a foreign correspondent surpasses that of the protagonists in his/her report. Whereas Fisk presumably does not believe that professional journalism gives one immunity or neutrality. This seems to constitute another example of distance, two different understandings of the ethical boundary between journalist as agent and the subjects of the story. Fisk does not see the boundary. In fact, he internalizes the boundary or conflict, and Little externalizes it, expunging himself from any personal moral implication. The ethical salience of Little's position derives particularly from his remark that Fisk is 'mixing two things up'. Again, Little's use of emotion separates and compartmentalizes self and Other, personal and public/professional whereas Fisk, like Pilger, conflates them. Fisk describes the Afghan incident:

I've been through this a thousand times. My car broke down in a road on the Afghan ... [inaudible]. And the people who stoned me had lost, which is the point which disappeared from the Wall Street Journal coverage, of course, had just lost their loved ones, their wives and their children in an

American air raid. That had to be deleted from the story, which it was by the vicious writer who wrote that famous piece saying that I deserved to get beaten up. Now, you know, I can't remember his name now, but anyway, if you take from a newspaper story or from an account the most relevant issues, that the people that tried to kill you had just lost their wives and children, then you no longer are talking about the same incident. If my wife and child had been murdered, killed, torn to pieces, by an Iranian bomb or an American bomb or whatever and I saw an American or an Iranian, I would want to kill them, I'm sorry, that's a human reaction.

Fisk is very emotional about the way the incident was reported by Mark Steyn³¹ in such a way as to dehumanize the Afghans who assailed him as violent and to disallow their common humanity as aggrieved victims.

That's what this whole thing was about. And it was taking out the element of the relatives being killed that made Mark Steyn, made that article so Nazi-like, and I use that word quite frankly to you, so Nazi-like in its viciousness. It was outrageous that he didn't once mention that these poor people had lost their loved ones.

I then asked Fisk whether his ethical position had any political ramifications. His response was a flat refutation:

You say left-wing. I have never voted ever in my life for anyone. What makes you think I'm left wing?

I've never voted. I've never shown my political leanings in a democratic vote. You may criticize that if you want or not as the case may be. I don't think I'm particularly left-wing. I know a lady who thinks I'm very right wing at times.

³¹ Mark Steyn, 'Hate-Me Crimes: A Self-loathing Multiculturalist Gets his Due', *The Wall Street Journal* (15/12/01).

I also asked whether Fisk believed that his professional journalistic commitment to the historical story of the West in Afghanistan was an example of putting the story first, maybe even with an ingredient of heroism and self-sacrifice:

Well, you know, the thing is, you see, I see people with amputation wounds every month. I see dead children every month in Afghanistan, in Iraq. I am going to Afghanistan two weeks from now. I'm going to Kandahar actually of all places. You know, as far as I was concerned, I've always known how easy it is to die. It's very easy to die. And I don't think that we white-skinned Anglo-Saxon Westerners have some particular protection or some particular god-like ability.

The irony here is that the more Fisk tries to diminish the role of his self in this incident by implying that, on an emotional level at least, the story was more important than his own life, the more he appears heroic and stands out. Despite the fact that both Fisk and Little are celebrated as journalistic exponents of compassion, this Afghanistan example illustrates a relative divergence in their ethical stances, which they themselves relate to their emotional experience of relationships with Western culture.

The difference between these two approaches to self and Other in journalistic use of emotion is encapsulated in Martin Bell's experience of reporting in Bosnia that led him to move from the Little to the Fisk position, from objectivity to 'journalism of attachment' (see Bell in Kieran (ed.), 1988). Hilsum had useful insight on this difference:

That's one of the complicated things about you know, that issue, Martin Bell and the journalism of attachment, which is that you might think you're attached but they won't necessarily know you're attached. And that's one of the difficult things about Iraq and people being kidnapped, is that you might think that you're this nice person who sympathizes with the nice Iraqis, but when the bastards get you and slit your throat you just become a

person who represents your colour, class, race, imperialist history of your country or whatever it is in their eyes. So you cease to have any existence in your emotional or ideological world. That doesn't matter any more. You don't matter any more.

The sophistication of what Hilsum is saying is that feeling attachment, compassion, is one thing, but knowing whether your good will is reciprocated or not is a different, more local and contingent affair.

Maggie O'Kane made an emotional plea for the ethical reporting of truth rather than objectivity (2.2 above) resonating with Fisk's deployment of experience. For her, objectivity restricts the emotional relationship between the reporter and conflict and constrains the deployment of experience. As an emotional model, it is anodyne and lacks moral strength as well as censoring individual journalists' deployment of subjectivity and experience.

The experience of parenting, particularly fathering, was mentioned as having a significant effect on Keane, Simpson and Bowen. Two of Keane's autobiographical books, *Letter to Daniel* and *Letters Home*, mixed reportage with details of his private life (see 7.6). Four years ago, Keane made a conscious decision to give up war reporting because his emotional mindset had shifted. As a result of reporting the war in Lebanon, he came so close to a bullet that he 'lost [his] nerve':

'I didn't want to get killed. I was scared out of my wits. After a long time of not being. You naturally feel fear, but as a younger man I never felt mortal fear. I didn't go out thinking: this could be the day. But I got to a point where I did feel that, almost as a certainty, and I hated it. You might say I lost my nerve. I would put it a different way: I got a dose of common sense'.³²

What seemingly most unnerved Keane was the thought of his young son losing his father:

³² Elizabeth Grice, interview with Fergal Keane, *The Telegraph*, 22 April 2010.

'I couldn't justify potentially robbing my children of a father. You can't wax lyrical about how much you love your kids and then jeopardize your life. I don't make a judgment on other people. Some are more resilient and can keep doing it for years. I wasn't. I thought I was. And it caught up with me. I couldn't do it any more' (ibid).

Most importantly, Keane's trauma had become conscious:

'My God, it was bleak. I didn't want to live like that because it doesn't reflect the full truth of the world and my life. There's just too much you miss when you stay in the world of conflict. You see things through a terribly narrow prism' (ibid).

Bowen put it this way:

These things do change you. I think what changes is the feeling that someone else is dependent on you.

In 2007, Simpson posted an article on the BBC website called 'When Suffering Gets Personal'. In it, he acknowledged a profound personal experiential change that potentially would alter his use of emotion reporting conflict and trauma. This change occurred when he was reporting from Kabul, Afghanistan. As in my interview, he acknowledged his 'dry' and 'clipped' style:

'I have never been a great one for the kind of reporting that tells you how the journalist feels when something terrible happens'.³³

He goes on:

³³ BBC News website: 28/07/07.

'It seems to me that we need reporters to be crisp and accurate and unexcitable, like ambulance crews. You certainly do not want an ambulance-man leaning over you and telling you how he feels about your injuries. You just want him to say they will get you sorted out in no time flat. But in Kabul the other day, and in Baghdad a couple of weeks earlier, I could not help noticing a change within myself. I tried to find out dispassionately what had happened, of course, but when I looked at the bodies on their stretchers and the injured moaning in pain I felt a new kind of anger. I knew immediately what it was all about. Last year, after four miscarriages over a period of some years and virtually giving up all hope of having a baby, my wife and I had a son: a healthy, active, jolly little boy we have named Rafe (short for Ranulph). With six billion people on earth, having a child is scarcely a rarity. But in our case it was so unexpected, so gratifying, that Rafe seems to us like a miracle'.

For Simpson, as for Keane, this was a profound self-realization as a result of experience and maturation of emotional intelligence. The claim that Simpson makes is that having a new son, at the age of sixty-two, affected his compassion for human life:

'But I have finally understood something, through the blessing of having another child late on. It is that life itself is immensely valuable. Not just the lives of people who think and look and maybe worship like you and me, people who are attractive or well-educated or rich, people who are the right type of Christian or the right type of Muslim. All lives. I realise this is terribly sententious: the moral equivalent of a motto from a Christmas cracker. Still, just because something is obvious does not automatically mean it is totally lacking in value. I am certainly not going to stop going to the kind of places where these things happen. But, at the grand old age of sixty-two, my reaction to them has changed. The fact is, my time reporting on violence and bombings in places like Baghdad and Kabul has shown me one essential thing: that the lives of the poor, the stupid, the old, the ugly, are no less precious to them and to the people around them, than the life of my little son Rafe is precious to me'.

In my interview with Simpson, I asked him if this evolution in his use of emotion had changed his practice:

It already has a bit. I'd rather not say, use of emotion. What I'd rather say is that I've allowed myself now, as a result of all that, to stray into areas which I think I would have kept out of before. I mean, I've allowed myself in a sense to stray a little bit into Fergal territory.

I then asked him if he could give me an example, to which he responded:

Well, I'll just give you one example that I can remember easily. Last year I suppose this was. I wanted to find a family of somebody who had been kidnapped in Baghdad because I was more and more hearing how people who were kidnapped would be tricked into paying the ransom and then they'd find the body of the person. We found a family, we didn't search deeply and discard others who weren't perfect for our purposes. The first family we took and it turned out to be exactly that. And they were dirt poor people. They had almost nothing. The bloke was a ministry driver on very little pay and he was kidnapped. They were asked for 5,000 dollars, something which was an enormous amount. The family managed to scrape it together. Then they were asked for a 1,000 more. By putting themselves absolutely in hock in every way, they managed to raise that and then they got the body. Perhaps it's something that we ourselves could understand, that most people could understand. I did a report on that and I felt that this is perfectly justified to put a good deal of emotion. I didn't want anybody to do anything. I didn't want governments to get involved. All I wanted was to say, look, Iraq is full of this sort of things [sic]. And I finished up the report by saying, instead of trying to present them as something sort of special, I said this has just happened to them but it happens to people every single day.

Interestingly, when I interviewed Keane, he offered the following opinion of Simpson, suggesting that the appreciation is mutual:

... if you ask me about one of the people I really regard, it's Simpson.

And the reason for this is:

I think John has maintained a drive that I envy.

Bowen also feels that having children changed his emotional outlook. I asked him if becoming a father had changed how he empathized and this was his response:

I find it harder to control my emotions.

I haven't done so many of those stories since then but the times that I have, you know, seeing fathers who have lost their children is unbearable. It's so easy to identify yourself with that person.

To sum up this chapter so far, in general, compassion is a rarer commodity amongst younger, often single, foreign correspondents who tend to be more macho, narcissistic, driven and less self-critical. The onset of fathering – in later life, in some cases – drastically transformed foreign correspondents' awareness and helped develop a compassionate outlook.

6.5: Celebrity journalists

I discussed above some of the implications of so-called parachute or hotel journalism. Out of that discussion emerged another news industry phenomenon of the last decade or so that dovetails with this phenomenon, that of celebrity or famous, recognized journalists. Recognition refers to how journalists contend with

being seen as celebrities by the mass-media public, especially for those journalists who subscribe to the notion that the mass-media public is not to be manipulated. The journalists I have interviewed struggle with the fact that the more popular recognition they gain, the more strain is put on their ability to specialize, as opposed to 'generalize', as foreign correspondents. They may be 'trusted' purveyors of what is happening out there but there is an argument that celebrity is a commercial device that deflects attention from the message to the messenger, and so compassionate agency is more likely to be subsumed into the performance and identity of the messenger than the reality of people 'living in' the report. Using advertising discourse, this could be construed as a form of branding journalists, a way of signifying the quality of celebrity that blocks the signified, the meaning peculiar to the people in the story, in the conflict. In other words, the 'living' of the report acts as a screen between viewer and people in the report. I asked Simpson whether he thought his celebrity got in the way, between story and audience:

I don't want it to be what I say. I know that that is the case. I know that's how they use me. And, of course, it's a complex thing because they pay me more for doing it. What do I want to do? Do I want to go back to where I was twenty years ago? And could I do it if I wanted to? Am I able to just sort of go quietly? We all do it to some extent. Now I'm thrashing around, trying to find excuses. There's Fergal, there's a sort of Fergality, and you know what you've got, you know he's got a big following, as a result. And that has happened to me. I mean, of course, I am ambivalent about it because it does mean I'm paid more and it's easier to get a seat in a restaurant and so on. At the same time, I don't like it. I don't feel comfortable with it and I don't think it's right. It's not ideally what I would want for myself, the BBC or anybody else.

This candid remark admits a conflict of interest between career and craft. What all these journalists but especially Simpson and Keane have in common is celebrity. What is so different between them is their respective journalistic styles, delivery and agency. They acknowledge and aspire to each other's virtues.

Hilsum made the following comment about celebrity journalism:

I think the danger for celebrity journalists is thinking that they are more important than the story, or that something is a story because they are there. You may come to believe that your emotional reaction is important, or a part of the story.

Maybe this could be more of a problem for 'objective' correspondents whose agencies attend more to audience expectation than 'political' correspondents. So, attending to your own emotional reaction can become a performative requirement. Hilsum's acute awareness of the danger may be one of the reasons she has not written an autobiography, despite a significant amount of acclaim.

What distinguishes most of my journalist interviewees is that they are all to greater or lesser extents not only celebrated but also foreign correspondents. Despite Fisk's modesty, he has probably won more awards than any of the other high-profile interviewees and has, therefore, achieved a good deal of notoriety. According to Snow, his own use of emotion has been an important factor in receiving awards:

I won in 1980, I think, Journalist of the Year, and then I won it last year [2005]. And, therefore, I have managed to win it at both ends of the spectrum, and I would say that on both occasions the prize was awarded for emotional reasons. Because they were very emotional reports: the Pakistan earthquake, New Orleans, and something else, I don't know what – Africa.

Keane, who has also won several awards, believes that awards are won not so much for explicit use of emotion but for implicit political reasons:

Well, there's safe outrage, 'oh, isn't it terrible what's happened in Iraq?' [whispering] Nobody is going to come down on you and attack you for

doing that. Absolutely nobody. You'll get pats on the back and awards for doing that.

Adam Curtis argues in a short documentary film broadcast last year,³⁴ echoing Chris Hedges' argument about a 'mythic narrative' in Western international reporting, that there is an institutional need for Western reporters to 'make us feel good about ourselves' by formulaically portraying countries such as Iraq, Palestine, Rwanda and Sudan as 'corrupt systems' and ourselves as good 'noble individuals'. One way that this institutional need is met is through formally and symbolically rewarding and validating journalists. It is noteworthy that probably the most common Hollywood portrayal for journalists is as noble heroic individuals (*Network*, *Veronica Guerin*, *All the President's Men*, *The Insider*, to name a few). A large part of Pilger's ethical argument concerns the history of how Western culture appropriates and categorizes the Other for its own political needs. As I have argued above, the subtext to this nobility is a form of narcissism, also referred to by Loyd, that excludes a 'real' emotional and, arguably historical, connection with the people caught up in conflict. In Levinasian terms, this use of emotion does not see the Other of another, but projects a mirror of him or herself and his/her culture and institution instead.

Loyd celebrates the independent integrity of two journalists, a foreign correspondent and cameraman, who were not publically famous but professionally lauded because they were wires journalists:

And some of the best journalists I see, two of the best are now dead. Kurt Shork and Miguel Gil Moreno who was a cameraman for AP (Associated Press); they were actually killed in the same instant. These journalists were brilliant in their own right and part of their brilliance as characters and as journalists was contained by the fact they worked for a wires organization, Reuters and AP. So they were some of the most famous war correspondents you had never heard of. You know what I mean?

I asked Loyd if these two individuals stood out for their emotional intelligence:

³⁴ *Newswipe* by Charlie Brooker, broadcast BBC2, 12/4/09.

Absolutely. Reuters ... you know your readership here, Frontline, well Frontline probably didn't exist then, but Frontline wouldn't be ringing up Kurt Shork from Reuters and asking him to report because you wouldn't see his name in papers very often. Occasionally, say in a paper like The Guardian, you might see 'a Reuters report by Kurt Shork', but The Times would pick up his reports, they'd just hand it to one of their own journalists. So these men's egos were never overblown. I am sure they were smart enough to deal with it if that did happen. One has to watch that. At the end of the day it's a very imperfect art and the people who do it are but human but you've got to try'.

Loyd's mentor, Kurt Schork, has gained belated recognition for his work after his tragic, premature death while reporting a conflict in Africa. Schork actively shunned public celebrity and consistently put the story first. But it is clear that he was highly respected within the field of foreign correspondents.

All of this points to the emotional complexity of being a foreign correspondent, especially in political and ethical terms. Externally, a foreign correspondent has to deal with (if Fisk will forgive my terminology!) conflict: a phenomenon that is emotional, political, cultural and physical. Internally, he/she has his own conflict between professional, organizational ideals such as objectivity and individual, moral drives. When a foreign correspondent achieves fame and public recognition, s/he then can become an instrument of public recognition, often a source of trust as well as nobility and even heroism. The danger is that this recognition supersedes the story itself and becomes the story, so that the journalist becomes a brand, a danger of which all my interviewees seem to be aware.

6.6: Conclusion

To sum up, use of emotion reporting conflict and trauma wins awards and prizes but at the expense of a kind of anodyne political neutralization. Celebrity journalism makes journalists more important than stories, distracts from news

stories and constrains compassionate agency. This chapter has drawn out some new strands in the already complex emotional relationship between foreign correspondents, as agents and mediators of sufferers, and actual sufferers of conflict and trauma. In relatively simple terms, the BBC journalists (Simpson, Little, Bowen and Keane) and Robertson are more influenced by national and institutional constraints, or boundaries, both of which are dependent on notions of who the audience is and what they require as information. The press journalists (Pilger, O’Kane, Loyd and Fisk) seem to have a slightly more individualized and less editorial emotional relationship with their work. Snow and Hilsum seem to sit somewhat between these two categories in that Channel Four evidently has a different institutional remit from the BBC, leading to a different use of time and emotion in some ways, but still remains a televisual ‘objective’ source of news, leading to a similar use of emotion to the BBC in others. In more complex terms, Keane and Pilger, in my view, stand out from those two groups, a fact that I would tentatively attribute to their own personal experiences and their own formative relationships not only with others but with their selves and, especially in Keane’s case, how that self evolved over time.

Sensory journalism problematizes objective as well as political approaches. Sensory journalism, by definition, relies much more heavily on individual agency than objective approaches allow. However, it is apparent that a sensory approach also has its own constraints in terms of its emotional engagement with other people’s suffering and trauma. A sensory human body is, by most accounts, its own boundary and its own story. How, therefore, can it pretend to represent truthfully other people’s senses and experience? Can one claim to understand someone else as well as s/he understands her/himself or even better? If one denies the space between self and Other, is that really being faithful to and truthful about the other? Is that more compassionate? And if one attempts to unlock the emotional space of agency, then more complexity and contradiction emerges in the form of experience, recognition and self-reflexivity (autobiography).

Objective practitioners aim for a kind of impartial, empathic relationship with sufferers of conflict. Political ones indicate stronger, more identificatory, arguably partial, attachment to sufferers as victims of power, abuse and warmongers. Neither approach problematizes the notion of self and false consciousness in acting as agents of compassion. Where they differ is that

objectivists flatten, instrumentalize and distance the self whereas political practitioners admit an element of subjective deployment of compassion.

Sensory journalism is deemed desirable for both approaches in the use of compassion. The example of Keane maybe demonstrates some of the complexity of a more sensory approach within an objective context. For political foreign correspondents, sensory reporting aids compassion in ways not possible for 'objectivists' because of lack of proximity to sufferers.

For objective correspondents, political partisanship and the self demarcate the boundary between compassionate reporting and intrusion. For political correspondents, 'objectivists' set the political boundary too far back, so the self has to compensate in a 'truthful' way. Compassion fatigue could be a limit of compassionate agency for both approaches, resulting either from insufficient 'intimate' engagement or excessive engagement. Heuristically, Keane stands out as doing the most to emotionally bridge the self and the Other.

For all interviewees, the truncation of time clearly leads to less journalistic ability to engage compassionately and, perhaps, an overdependence on technology. Hotel/parachute journalism is likely to be more of a spatial constraint for institutional, embedded and objective journalists. More independent ones, such as Fisk and Pilger, are, in theory, less constrained temporally but, in war zones such as Afghanistan, Iraq and Sudan, still have limited time to operate. Little's Bosnian experience became traumatic because of excessive time and eschewed boundaries between self and Other. Experience, in terms of age, tends to enable and enhance compassionate agency. Public recognition distorts compassionate agency and encourages narcissism, especially for less experienced practitioners.

Chapter Seven: Life Narratives

7.1: Other journalistic rationales for writing autobiographies

The following voices are foreign correspondents not interviewed for this research who gave other rationales for writing autobiographies. As mentioned above, the autobiography genre amongst British journalists emerged in the 1980s. Earlier, James Cameron, a BBC foreign correspondent celebrated for his political invective, wrote an autobiography in 1965 in an era where autobiography was, for him, seemingly 'pretentious' and, therefore, taboo. Here is how he justifies writing such a book:

'There are few more daunting or pretentious words than "autobiography"; it argues a very odd nature in man who feels obliged to produce such a thing. In politicians and serious soldiers it can perhaps be mitigated by by-products of historical usefulness, but among writers to trade it suggests a kind of literary masturbation: have they nothing better to describe than themselves? I am constantly surprised to hear that people buy such books, which in no way impedes my earnest hope that they shall not stop now.

This is autobiography only in the sense that much of it concerns aspects of my life that no one has hitherto paid me to describe'. (Cameron, 1967: *Foreword*)

Note his professionally and personally derived fear of veering away from history towards 'literary masturbation'; what Lau would call the repression of autobiography (see below). Although he has ostensibly written an autobiography, he still maintains a perspective of being on the outside, looking in, even on himself.

What autobiography provides for all journalists is a different use of time, that is, more time, to reflect and ruminate, leading to new critical understandings of journalistic agency:

‘Working for a weekly paper has given me the luxury of time to be able to go behind the lines where other reporters don’t and tell the stories of the forgotten’. (Lamb, 2008)

‘The Bosnian war is less its subject than its connecting thread. I have written it because this war has mattered to me more than anything else I have lived through, and still does; and I felt the need to attempt a more permanent record of what happened and how we dealt at with it than that which is available in a breathless minute and forty-two seconds on the evening news. (Bell, 2004)

It is about thinking through what I have lived through – because if not, what’s the point? (Bell, 2004: 3)

A common theme in many journalists’ rationales for writing autobiographies is the complex notion of witnessing. For example, Peter Beaumont declares in his introduction:

‘Finally, and perhaps inevitably in a book of this nature, I have been forced to confront my own role as a witness – and therefore participant of a kind in the conflicts I have visited’. (2009: 2)

Caroline Emcke makes the following introductory comment about witnessing the ‘unbearable’, surely a reference to trauma:

‘Letters from a witness whom one can imagine, who becomes visible, who describes how one responds to violence, who wanders between different worlds and tries to translate between them – someone who also mentions what goes wrong, what embarrasses, what is unbearable – such letters can be credible testimony to the wars and their victims’. (2007: xii)

Note Emcke's invocation of a 'visible' witness. Maybe this implies that an objective witness is invisible. Note also her reference to victims and compassionate agency. The theme of compassion is evident in a good many introductions to journalists' autobiographies:

'To me the real story in war is not the bang-bang but the lives of those trying to survive behind the lines'. (Lamb, 2008: 5)

'When I began I was clear that what I wished to do was to give back a voice – or rather voices – to those affected by war'. (Beaumont, 2009:2)

'Hundreds of people speak through this book, and I have tried to present their stories, their lives, in their own words'. (Di Giovanni, 2004: xii)

'The people in these articles are ordinary people, anyone; what happened to them happened to uncounted others'. (Gellhorn, 1993: 377)

'This book is, above all else, about human beings. It is about the families in Baghdad who insisted on providing food to a foreign guest even as outside coalition troops and armed gangs fought for control. It is about the US soldiers posted from homes half a world away to a place they were equipped neither to understand nor to help'. (Poole, 2008: x)

This relatively new way of understanding subjective agency clearly has ethical and spatial dimensionality, an attempt to complicate the distance of objective journalism:

'It is, inevitably, also about me: a reporter from London learning the consequences for those on the ground of decisions made by politicians and diplomats in their offices far away in Washington and Whitehall'. (Poole, 2008: x)

This ethical turn veers away from objective to political, humanitarian ethics:

‘Now I had decided to do something myself, something that for all the years past had never been so far away. I would practice what I had been preaching, put my foot where my mouth was, attempt one practical contribution. I would take a child out of Sarajevo and I was already two-thirds into the action’. (Nicholson, 1994)

But for another foreign correspondent, Kate Adie, who also worked in Bosnia, such an ethical turn was more of a cynical ploy to engage audiences and turn a profit:

‘Over the five years we spent in the Balkans, it dawned on my colleague Martin Bell and myself that the news system we had known was being dispatched – though it dawned rather slowly, mainly because we were preoccupied with preventing ourselves being dispatched by the locals. Put simply, news was increasingly selected not for its significance but for its interest. A growing nervousness about ‘relevance’ and ‘accountability’ was driving editors to include more items centred on consumer values and entertainment appeal, all packaged with presentation that was appealingly easy on the eye, and given pace with frequent ‘live’ spots. An underlying fear that viewers might be easily bored, or fail to find items ‘relevant’ to their own lives, narrowed horizons and widened the scope for sentiment and personal opinion. And the growth of 24-hour channels brought about a dramatic increase in speculation and comment – purely to fill the time available – from reporters who hitherto had not been expected to express opinions’. (Adie, 2002: 9)

The phenomenon of trauma is also evident in these autobiographies:

‘The pain of memory endures alongside this nostalgia. Some memories remained buried in a body bag so deep within me that it was years before I let them out’. (Swain, 1998: 275)

‘I thought that publishing the facts about my personal life would help to chase away some of my demons. Instead, all I was left with was the pain and guilt that I brought upon myself by betraying my beautiful wife and family’. (McCullin, 2002: *Preface*)

But also, for McCullin, the book is posited as a therapeutic exercise to try to unravel his trauma as well as catch up:

‘So it all looks like I am, at last, beginning to pick up the pieces of my life once again’. (ibid.)

For Steele, compassion and trauma have become inextricably linked:

‘All these people I’ve seen, all these precious lives wandering through my eyes. All of them so easily forgotten by the world after the pictures fade. But I won’t forget. I can’t forget. Their stories are heartbreaking and true and need to be told. Maybe all of us war cameramen know that in our hearts’. (Steele, 2002: 543)

And the following review of Emcke’s book by Amelie Rorty reaffirms its power of witnessing and respecting the Other without usurping the Other:

‘She has made herself transparent to the testimony of her encounters. Her intelligent sensitivity forbids the illusion – the presumption – that we have shared the experience of those who know the anguish of man’s inhumanity to man. She prompts us to ask: how is this – how does this – remain possible?’ (2007: *back cover*)

The above quotation also reminds us of the traumatic possibility of truly and compassionately witnessing the experience of the Other. For Hewitt, writing an

autobiography provided an opportunity for him to try to thaw his locked in, 'frozen' trauma:

'It was after I had returned from covering the war in Iraq that I felt it was time to go unplugged, to unfreeze Greene's 'soul on ice', to sift through the notebooks, the video clips, the memories of colleagues and to tell what happened beyond the eye of the camera. Not just the skein of major events, but the humour, at times surreal, of a life on the road'. (Hewitt, 2005: 11)

'We are writing about Vietnam now because we feel it is important to keep those agonizing yet strangely exhilarating days alive, those dark days that changed us in ways we are still trying to understand'. (Fawcett et al., 2002: back jacket)

Two other qualities that emerge from foreign correspondents' autobiographies are 'atmosphere' and a moving beyond 'matter-of-factness':

'It is almost impossible to write matter-of-factly about war, because it is the most moving of human experiences. Few reporters under fire fail to become emotionally engaged. Some find themselves identifying with the men whose trenches they share, as I did in the Falklands; the writing of others is dominated by revulsion towards the excesses of their fellow men, like that of so many correspondents in Lebanon and Indochina'. (Hastings, 2000: xxi)

'In the beginning it was my intention not to write another war book, but to try an experiment: merely to sketch in the military details and tell the story of the collapse of German Europe sociologically and politically, psychologically and even emotionally. I was after atmosphere more than fact'. (Moorhead, 1945: xix)

In terms of spatiality, several correspondents use autobiography as a political means of trying to close the gap between conflict and audiences in order to bypass powerful, abstract justifications for war:

‘Many younger Americans know Vietnam only as an abstraction – a few paragraphs in a textbook, a documentary on the History Channel, or as thousands of names on a black granite wall in Washington, DC. But for those who served and those who suffered, for those who fought and those who watched it unfold on television, Vietnam will always be a part of us’.
(Fawcett et al., 2002: back cover)

This thesis will now shed more light on complex agency by exploring five interviewee autobiographies in more detail: those by Anthony Loyd, Jeremy Bowen, Jon Snow, Fergal Keane and John Simpson.

Having discussed the respondents’ constitutions of rules of the institutional game and feelings for the game (including trauma, moral loyalties and emotional attachments), the thesis narrative now turns to how respondents constitute their life influences, narratives and biographies. I hesitate to use the signifier ‘autobiography’ because some of the interviewees are uncomfortable with the application of the word to their published accounts of the experience of reporting war, conflict and crisis. This Chapter, ‘Life Narratives’, completes this thesis’ theoretical construction of complex agency.

At the end of Chapter Two, I invoked three canonical post-structural voices who speak to the political, philosophical and psychological problems of the ‘autobiographical’ self. Foucault articulates a hermeneutics of the self or subject as secondary to powerful external discourses, such as institutional media. For him, ‘rules of the game’ such as objectivity and truth, and maybe even emotional attachments such as compassion, are the result of multiple external, institutional constraints. As I argued in Chapters Four, Five and Six, such discourses and constraints are subjectively, internally structured in the interviewees’ agencies. I say ‘maybe even emotional attachments’ because I would like to leave open the possibility that non-institutional foreign correspondents such as Pilger, as well as some institutional press foreign correspondents, such as O’Kane and Fisk, are

relatively less constrained. On the other hand, as argued in Chapter Six, their emotional attachments are arguably different internalized 'rules of the game' of foreign correspondence, different but no less constrained biases, partialities, loyalties and prejudices. It has also been argued in the last three chapters that within elite British television institutional foreign correspondence, voices like Keane, Little and Snow do constitute themselves as having different degrees of subjective and political agency.

Foucault claims that for the subject to have 'right of access to truth', s/he must be changed and become, to a certain extent, other than her/himself' (2001: 15). This hermeneutic is somewhat evident in the fourteen correspondents' life narratives as complex agencies of self-development and will be set out at length below.

Smith (*pace* Derrida) articulates 'a fantasm of inclusion' (1995: 191) in autobiographical discourse. This 'fantasm of inclusion', as argued in the previous chapter, is a core problem for witnessing trauma, a tension evident between Frosh's 'civil inattention' and Peters' 'bodily testament'. 'Fantasm of inclusion' also resonated in compassionate agency for foreign correspondents, a tension that inheres in the difference between what Meek calls compassionate and unconscious agency. Both, he argues are more exclusive than inclusive agencies, but the former he regards as more false. Several of the interviewees have written autobiographical books but the prevalent proper distance for them is still standing back, civil inattention, objectivity taking precedence over articulations of subjectivity, guarding against what Simpson calls manipulation. This is evident in Simpson, Bowen and, to a certain extent, Snow's autobiographies, and will be discussed below. Two other interviewees who have published autobiographical books, Keane and Loyd, interestingly immerse the narratives of their books in their subjective, first-person voices. Fisk and Pilger, on the other hand, have written non-autobiographical historical books, which like their journalistic voices, are political, critical and historically revisionist. But Fisk and Pilger still do not allow the first person voice to intrude in their third-person narratives.

Hagberg (*pace* Stanley Cavell *pace* Wittgenstein) articulates autobiography as competing pictures of introspection, therapeutic self-defining memory, which speak to Giddens' conception of self-reflexive self as a self-identifying life narrative. But, when it comes to traumatic experiences, such mental integration fragments

into competing sub-narratives that momentarily narcissistically disassociate with external reality. This speaks to the journalistic constitutions of trauma experienced by Brayne, Little and Keane; life narrative events where conflicting, competing pictures of introspection between self and Other temporarily (dis)affected their work in conflict zones. In their autobiographical work, two of the interviewees, Keane and Bowen, disclose traumatic experiences, but the other three tend to shy away from revealing internal competing pictures of introspection, instances of traumatic intrusion. The usefulness of this project is to map externally fourteen competing subjectivities and agencies that complicate the picture of British foreign correspondence. As stated in the Conclusion below, it is intended that such competing pictures speak to an academic readership as well as a journalistic one.

Brayne and Chouliaraki, particularly regarding television reporting, both talk about a dual awareness and approach to news reporting, whereby foreign correspondents broadly perform two distinct roles, performing emotion, what it feels like to be there, and describing and analysing what is happening there. For Brayne, dual awareness involves '*going into the trauma*', moving the audience, as well as providing politics and context. For Chouliaraki, the duality of mediation involves the simultaneous agencies of immediate 'theatrical emotion' and more relatively time-consuming 'agoraic deliberation'. In terms of journalistic self, both these models obliquely point towards an 'objective', flattened self and an 'emotional', prominent self: two selves, a contradiction or an ambivalence for an individual agent. This particular contradiction is multiply evident in the cross section of foreign correspondent autobiographies that I have analysed for this research. From Herr's *Dispatches*, to Simpson's gentle exhortation to accept the world the way it is, to Keane, for whom his experience of childhood is indelibly inscribed on his foreign correspondence, each respondent has a different understanding of his or her agency. What I hope this chapter adds, through complex agency, is a more complex set of constitutions of foreign correspondent practice that build on the useful but simple theoretical binary of agentive objectivity versus agential emotion.

The following chapter fulfils the triangulation of the research material – interview data, autobiographical texts and the cross-referencing between the two. It is important to note the curiosity of the fact that certain journalists, especially foreign correspondents, write autobiographies. This chapter reads foreign correspondent autobiographical material against the interview material to

understand different journalistic hermeneutics of subjectivity, ‘fantasms of inclusion’ and pictures of introspection. Given that objectivity as the core rule of the institutional game, trauma and compassion as self/Other-constituted emotional attachments are the main nodes of emotional discourse so far identified by this research on journalistic agency and subjectivity reporting conflict, as well as mapped by media analytic theory, this chapter now analyses foreign correspondent autobiographies for other traces of these phenomena.

Certain journalists, most of the interviewees, are ‘celebrated’ at public events. These include Anthony Loyd, Allan Little, Jeremy Bowen, Lindsey Hilsum, John Simpson and Jon Snow and Robert Fisk at the Frontline Club in the *Insight with* series orchestrated by Vin Ray, the former director of the BBC College of Journalism. Even John Pilger has been a guest speaker at the Frontline Club. Such journalists are also given platforms at literary festivals, such as Hay-on-Wye, and elsewhere. Fergal Keane gave a talk in 2010 at the National Army Museum, London, as part of the launch of his latest book, a military-historical one, *Kohima: The Last Great Battle of Empire*, a public event that promoted him as ‘Celebrity Speaker’. John Simpson did likewise this year with his latest book, *Unreliable Sources*. All of this seems to demonstrate the power of journalistic voices in popular culture and the opportunities they have to expand their agencies outside of the journalistic profession.

Autobiographies are arguably becoming a major contemporary phenomenon in wider, popular culture. According to Coward (in Allan (ed.), 2010: 235):

‘The growth of autobiographical, ‘confessional’ journalism is one of the most striking elements in contemporary journalism’.

The conflation of autobiography and ‘confession’ suggests a different journalistic agency, with new parameters associated with therapy, time, process and the self. Coward goes on:

‘Although the autobiographical, confessional society may have origins earlier in the twentieth century, the 1980s witnessed a quantum leap. It was this shift which eventually eroded the traditional journalistic values which had regarded personal and emotional accounts as beyond the proper business of journalism’. (ibid.: 237)

New journalism emerged in the United States in the 1960s and 70s as an unconventional style incorporating literary techniques. Writers who famously adopted this approach were Truman Capote, Hunter S. Thompson, Norman Mailer, Joan Didion and Robert Christgau. The historical development of ‘new journalism’, or gonzo journalism brought experience and feeling to the cultural fore. It also brought a controversial degree of fiction, especially through foreign correspondent autobiographers such as Kapuscinski. New journalism was deemed by O’Kane to be an influence on her writing. Two other tropes associated with this subjective cultural turn are confession and witnessing. The former, according to Plummer, is the result of cultural identity crisis and the collapse of traditional community, and is also bound up with the therapeutic cultural turn:

‘What lies at the heart of this enormous outpouring of writing is ... is the idea that a highly individuated, self-conscious and unstable identity is replacing the old, stable, unitary self of traditional communities ... The new selves are ‘constructed’ through shifts and changes in the modern world, and partly create a new sense of permanent identity crisis’. (Plummer, 2001: 83)

In terms of witnessing, we are arguably experiencing a zeitgeist that democratizes experience to the extent that how we witness events is as important as who witnesses them. In journalism, this is leading to critical questions about the difference between a professional journalist and a citizen one. Objectivity used to be a strategic, professional ritual, a central rule of the game that demarcated that authoritative difference.

Of my interviewees, five have written autobiographies, two of them more than one. These are John Simpson (1999-2008), Fergal Keane (1995- 2005), Jeremy

Bowen (2006), Jon Snow (2005) and Anthony Loyd (2002 and 2007). Several interviewees have written 'historical' or 'political' texts that continue to screen their selves from their work. Bowen has written a book on his experience(s) of reporting the recent Arab Spring uprisings. Little has co-authored a historical book on the former Yugoslavia and written introductions and chapters for books on journalism and history. Hilsum has just written a book on recent Libyan turbulent history. Pilger and Fisk fall into a resistant, 'decentring', category but are prolific authors. Pilger wrote eleven books between 1975 and 2006, most of which are essays rather than reportage, although the earlier publications are collections of reports. Robert Fisk has published two lengthy historical books and one collection of comment and analytical writing, not reports. Fisk's *The Age of the Warrior* contains sporadic autobiographical memories, as do his weekly published columns the Saturday edition of *The Independent*. Melvern has published historical books on the Rwandan genocide.

The subjective cultural turn in journalism leads to questions of whether such work produces a flattening and amateurization of journalism that will ultimately make journalists, particularly foreign correspondents, redundant. Sambrook attributes this evolution to the advent of social media:

'The idea of the Foreign Correspondent is a relic of a pre-networked age. As the internet spreads there are more and more places where we can simply ask those who are living through events what they think of them and seek insights and analysis from those who know the people and the places involved. This change will ripple through the newsgathering departments of every major media organization'.³⁵

For my research, the key questions are, do autobiographical discourses work contrapuntally alongside journalistic practice and its discourses? Do they provoke contradictions and, if so, why do journalists want to raise such contradictions? Apart from accumulation of capital (hard and 'soft' cultural), is there something foreign correspondents want to convey in their books that is the

³⁵ www.fromthefrontline.co.uk: 'The Rise and Demise of the Foreign Correspondent', in 'Are Foreign Correspondents Redundant?', 2010, accessed 3/3/11.

result of a different experience of time and reflection on what they have experienced which returns to them as memory, memoirs? Is there a sense of desiring to set the record straight that either they could not do before because of institutional constraints or because they simply did not recognize the desire at the time of reporting world events? For example, when I discussed with Simpson the BBC reporting of the Iraq War in 2003, although he was defensive about criticism of the BBC's objectivity, he was keen to say that he had gone to great individual lengths to combat accusations that the BBC had kowtowed to the Blair government over the Dr David Kelly affair:

And there was also the business of what the reporting had been. There was a culture within the BBC, the top management for a while led by that frightful Richard Ryder, who was the Acting Chairman, to say, 'We're very sorry for everything we've done. And if we ever do anything again, please feel free to punish us'. And, in the end, I felt I couldn't live with myself unless I entered some kind of protest about that. And I just thought I couldn't bear it. Funnily enough, I'd been reading a part of Asa Briggs' history of the BBC, and he goes through all the files, all the letters and everything. And I thought, I could not bear it if some future Asa Briggs goes through the files and doesn't find that anybody within the BBC said anything about this business of grovelling to the government. So I wrote a letter, I wrote a really nasty letter that went far stronger than I probably even should have and sent it off. I also got a somewhat mild response later. But there somewhere in the archives is a letter from somebody in the BBC that says, 'let's not behave like this'.

It is noteworthy that Simpson's protest was carried out through a private, individual letter rather than public broadcast, although, of course, he hopes his protest will form part of the future public record.

Anthony Loyd has written two books on his experience of being a war writer which, like Michael Herr's *Dispatches*, Peter Beaumont's *The Secret Life of War*, Sebastian Junger's *War* and many others in the same generic vein, are not strictly speaking solely autobiographical accounts but also examples of new

journalism, reportage, memoirs or war reporting. The tension between objectivity and autobiographical self is particularly evident in Keane's, Loyd's and Beaumont's books, redolent of some of the articulations and boundaries discussed in the previous three chapters between objective and political agency. Maggie O'Kane has not written any books. Hilsum published *Sandstorm: Libya in the Time of Revolution* in 2012. In my interview with Hilsum, she explained her position on 'autobiographical' emotional material:

We are not the story. The story is the people we're reporting on. And I don't like the kind of reporting which puts a lot of emphasis on our emotional reaction to what's going on. I'm reporting what's going on. My own emotional reaction is my own problem. Now, I have written quite a few articles on that subject as a separate thing, which is fine. One is a human being. But, in the actual reporting of the event, I do believe in maintaining distance.

Little, like Hilsum, despite a good degree of recognition, has not written an autobiography but has been active as a guest speaker for the Frontline Club, as a speaker for BBC College of Journalism events and even a guest speaker at his former secondary school last year. As an attendant of some of these events and a viewer of videos of such events, if Little will forgive me, I have managed to assemble some interesting biographical information. At the Frontline Club in 2009 (25th November), Little disclosed that, in his professional role, 'little acts of kindness upset me most', acts of generosity in the face of great adversity. Little also disclosed that when he comes home, all he wants is 'normality'. He gave the example here of his father never going into a pub without a tie. As an objective practitioner of foreign correspondence, where distance between self and story, self and Other, is paramount, it makes sense that any disruption of boundaries such as between war and decency, between interviewee and friend, should be traumatic. Little's traumatic period in Bosnia was largely the result of friends being murdered.

Of the interviewees, Pilger, O'Kane and Keane have now moved into documentary film and television production. Keane has also published a novel based on real Second World War events and extensive research. Pilger still writes

‘comment and analysis’ journalism on international issues. Simpson, Fisk, Loyd, Little, Hilsum, Keane, Bowen and Snow still practice foreign correspondence.

My argument is that objectivity, trauma, compassion and autobiography are four distinct examples of complex agency (see 2.8). What the last three nodes of emotional discourse have in common is a dialogic or internalized dialectical, a process-based, ‘subjective turn’ in the role of the self as ‘self-as-object-and-knower’ rather than simply self-as-object. This leads to new theoretical notions of witnessing and journalism as participation rather than detachment, as reflexivity and narcissism, revealing a tension between different modes of journalistic witnessing, witnessing as an object and witnessing as a self-reflexive knowing agent. After thoroughly analysing five interviewee autobiographies as well as other foreign correspondent autobiographies, some very interesting elements emerge that constitute complex agency. As well as articulations of objectivity, trauma and compassion, these elements include temporal, personal, emotional issues, witnessing and ethical issues.

Lau (2009: 193) has conducted some important analysis of Michael Herr’s autobiography, *Dispatches*, which serves as a useful springboard for looking at other journalistic autobiographies. Lau claims that the autobiographical narrative running through *Dispatches* is repressed. In other words, despite its ‘autobiographical’ form, the book demonstrates a ‘complex dynamic of self-representation’ which ‘reflects Herr’s ambivalence toward his role in Vietnam and his preoccupation with the ethical responsibilities of the reporter’. In order to accept the moral obligation to tell the stories of others, to be compassionate, Herr displaces his own traumatic story. As a journalist schooled in the principle and practice of objectivity, this ‘autobiographical’ book certainly reveals complex agency. Lau reads *Dispatches* as an indirect representation of trauma. For example, the author, Michael Herr, describes himself as frozen:

‘The problem was that you didn’t always know what you were seeing until later. Maybe years later, that a lot of it never made it in at all, it just stayed there stored in your eyes. Time and information, rock and roll, life itself, the information isn’t frozen, you are’. (1977: 20)

Gilmore (2001: 7) argues that sufferers of trauma often resist distinctly autobiographical modes of writing:

‘Because testimonial projects require subjects to confess, to bear witness, to make public and shareable a private and intolerable pain, they enter into a legalistic framework in which their efforts can move quickly beyond their interpretation and control, become exposed as ambiguous, and therefore subject to judgements about their veracity and worth ... Although those who can tell their stories benefit from the therapeutic balm of words, the path to this achievement is strewn with obstacles. To navigate it, some writers move away from recognizably autobiographical forms even as they engage autobiography’s central questions’.

This dynamic tension is played out in several of the journalists’ autobiographies I have looked at, some of which use the medium to reinforce relatively fixed notions of objectivity and history, and others which bring in personal, emotional and political issues, often in the form of compassion and trauma.

As signposted in 2.7, according to scientists such as Damasio, the autobiographical self is a complex part of the self as a bundle of self-as-knower and self-as-object.

7.2: Interviewee rationales for writing autobiographies

Why do journalists write autobiographies? What additional material do these provide in understanding how foreign correspondents constitute their journalistic practice? I have not been able to locate a single exegesis for Loyd’s production of two journalistic books, which ambivalently perform an autobiographical, but not exclusively autobiographical, role. I have gleaned multiple hints of reasons for autobiography in Loyd’s two books. The central narrative of both his books is written from the first-person but both books are interspersed with short italicized sections which seemingly are more personal, self-conscious

accounts, where the author looks more at himself than the wars he reports. This contrived separation of personal and historical voices seems to acknowledge a difference, potentially a conflict, between professional objectivity and subjectivity, a deliberately demarcated boundary. The personal sections are also temporally separate, more from the mediated perspective of the present than the immediate moment of the past. Arguably, if Loyd were to step too far out of the internalized 'rules of the game', then his autobiographical self would subvert his professional, objective identity. In many ways, his two books, *My War Gone By, I Miss It So* (1999) and *Another Bloody Love Letter* (2007) constitute what Fergal Keane describes as:

'A truly exceptional book, one of those rare moments in journalistic writing when you can sit back and realize that you are in the presence of somebody willing to take the supreme risk of a writer, of extending their inner self'. (Keane in Loyd, 1999: back cover to *My War Gone By*)

This characterization of the autobiography fits the models of indirect trauma (Lau) and 'risky' testimonial project (Gilmore).

Martin Bell describes *My War Gone By, I Miss It So* both as a memoir and as war reporting, but what may mark its difference from Loyd's regular *Times* dispatches is its deliberate alternation of immediate, local detail and mediated 'strategic overview':

'Forget the strategic overview. All war is local. It is about the ditch in which the soldier crouches and the ground on which he fights and maybe dies. The same applies to the war reporter. Anthony Loyd has been there and knows it'. (1999: ii)

Bell alludes to the tension between 'local' and 'overview', the overview pertaining to objectivity and the local to subjectivity. Of course, Loyd had to complexly negotiate this dialectic.

Another clue to Loyd's rationale for writing these two books is in their titles, which both capture the common theme of powerful conflict and emotion, the conscious and becoming conscious of the conflation of inner and outer conflict, a powerful, complex, intersubjective (see Chapter 2) zone between inner and outer, the painfully honest disclosure of early formative conflict and a driving therapeutic need to address that addiction in his work. Both book titles suggest strong affect, love, which come from the powerful, compassionate intimate friendship with the traumatized survivors of war that Loyd's work entailed:

'We had shared something together in Sarajevo so intimate and incommunicable, a humility and compassion among individuals unconnected by blood tie, which I have never found elsewhere. Some would call it the human spirit. Whatever it was, to discuss those times in London seemed an unbearable prospect: the needless wounding of a walk back into loss that I just could not face. I hope that they understand'. (Loyd, 1999: 321)

Anthony Loyd stands out as someone who used journalism as a means to an end and that end was the witnessing of war, something he could not find as a soldier in the Gulf War. His great grandfather, Adrian Carton De Wiart, was a celebrated general who published his memoirs in 1950, *The Memoirs of Lieutenant General Sir Adrian Carton de Wiart*. Soldiering was a path well trodden by his immediate male ancestors:

'My own path was obvious: I wanted to go to war, so I joined the army. There had never been any family pressure for me to sign up. There never had to be. From my earliest recall I had wanted only to be a soldier. The legends of my ancestors were motivation enough'. (ibid.: 64)

Loyd made the point in my interview with him that his news pieces for *The Times* are separate from his books:

It was something I certainly went into in my book. But I think, in fairness, that my book I would not regard necessarily as a journalistic work. I mean it's about journalism, but primarily it's about what I saw in Bosnia, what I thought I was doing there, and what the interface for that was. And, of course, it's got stuff to do with journalism but it's not a journalistic book. But, you know, when I was last in Iraq, in March this year [2006], probably the journalism I'm doing now is in a style completely dissimilar to the book'.

The very first line of Simpson's first 'non-autobiographical' autobiography states:

'This book is not intended to be an autobiography. It is partly an explanation for the curious life I lead, and partly an account of the way the world has changed in the thirty years I have been observing it professionally. Mostly, though, it is a collection of stories, often with a light dusting of fiction over them'. (Simpson, 1998: Introduction)

This deliberate repression of autobiographical elements of his autobiography seems to suggest a conflict of interest between his self and 'stories', the boundary between two elements which Simpson still wants to make as seamless as possible. However, he acknowledges the light application of 'fiction', which is clearly a partial departure from objective reporting and a resort to a degree of subjective agency. He uses his 'autobiography' to augment and flesh out his news reports. In other words, he does not seem to want to separate his personal life from his professional one:

'In the ears of a long-serving BBC lifer allowed into the community on parole, the pronoun 'I' always has a mildly indecent feeling to it. "That is the one word that never appears in the BBC reporter's dictionary", said one of my stuffier editors to me in 1969: it faintly crossed my mind to use one or two other words to him which weren't in the dictionary either, but I decided not to. Instead, I nodded ingratiatingly. And the older I get, the more I find I agree with him'. (Simpson, 2002: xvi)

The introduction to Simpson's most recent 'autobiography', *Not Quite World's End*, appeals to the reader to accept the world as it is, particularly Iraq, underlining Simpson's resistance to the humanitarian and political dimensions of complex agency:

'I hope this book will help you to make up your mind about what has happened in Iraq. And perhaps I will be fortunate enough by the end – assuming I haven't bored you too much long before that point – to persuade you to look at the world in a way which, if it isn't necessarily all that optimistic, may at least be a little more accepting'. (Simpson, 2007: ix)

Jon Snow discloses relatively little information on why he has written an autobiography, but is not dissimilar to Simpson in the way he wants to seamlessly merge his life, his 'personal journey', into objective history:

'This book is the record of a personal journey that starts in the cosy years after the Second World War and treads the key stepping stone[s] since, to arrive at that great pre-emptive action that was cast as an endeavour to strike down a very immediate threat to our survival, the war on Iraq'. (Snow, 2004: 6)

Bowen uses his autobiography to open a discussion on his relationship with war reporting, which he describes as a love affair as well as an addiction:

'This is the story of a love affair that went wrong. It isn't over. It still has its moments and it might go on for many more years. But it will never be what it was when it started ... Many people have asked me why journalists bet their lives by going to wars. The answer is complicated, and different people have their own reasons, but this book is an attempt to explain mine, and trying to do so is not easy. I felt stretched, and full, in a war. For me it was the highest form of journalism. I hated the killing, but if it was

going to happen I wanted it to be close to me and my television camera'.
(Bowen, 2006: 3)

In a documentary made for BBC television in 2005 entitled *Jeremy Bowen: On the Frontline*, Bowen actually talks about being addicted to war. When interviewed, Bowen also made the following observation about what he tried to write about in his book:

I'm very pleased that this is the longest that any of us have had without personal experience of war in hundreds of years. I tried to write about it a bit in the book. Most people's views of war are conditioned by films and by what they see in fiction. So, when elements of reality correspond to what the fiction seems to look like, then it can get a false glamour.

Keane has written five autobiographical books: *The Bondage of Fear: A Journey Through the Last White Empire* (1994), *Season of Blood: a Rwandan Journey* (1995), *Letter to Daniel: Despatches from the Heart* (1996), *Letters Home* (1999) and *All of These People* (2005). In 2000, he made a three-part TV documentary, *Forgotten Britain*, a result of Keane's exploration of and observations of socially excluded people in British cities. This was turned into a book the following year called *A Stranger's Eye: A Foreign Correspondent's View of Britain*. *Bondage of Fear* and *Season of Blood* are personal accounts of reporting, respectively, violent political change in South Africa and the Rwandan genocide in 1994. *Letter to Daniel* and *Letters Home* are collections of articles and *From Our Own Correspondent* broadcasts (BBC Radio 4), again with a strong personal elements. *All of These People* is a more conventional autobiographical account of his life so far, although Keane prefers to call the book a memoir.

'This work stands separate from the daily work of news reporting and analysis which takes up the vast majority of time as a BBC correspondent. It reflects, as the title suggests, a more personal engagement with the stories and people I encountered over the past six years. I believe passionately in a journalism that speaks from the heart and the mind, and *FOOC* [*From Our*

Own Correspondent], that most wonderful of all BBC programmes, is the perfect vehicle for this'. (2005: 10)

Two strong connections that Keane makes between the preoccupations of his journalism and his personal life are childhood and his father:

'When I tried to describe my journalistic life and world, I found my father waiting for me at every corner'. (Keane, 2006: xii)

'When I now look at my journalism, at the preoccupations which have remained constant – human rights, the struggles for reconciliation in wounded lands, the impulse to find hope in the face of desolation – I know that I am largely defined by the experiences of childhood'. (ibid: xii)

Letters to Daniel and *Letters Home* are about fatherhood:

'One week before the birth of our first child, Daniel, the editor of *From Our Own Correspondent* (FOOC) for BBC Radio 4, Tony Grant, rang and suggested I write a piece about becoming a father. At first, I was reluctant to go ahead. My own childhood had been troubled and I would not have been able to write honestly without some reference to the past. Allied to that is the difficult question of just how much of him/herself a foreign correspondent can legitimately inject into what they write, even for a programme with as broad a remit as FOOC. I have always tried to write from the heart as well as the head and knew that a despatch about fatherhood would have to be a deeply personal exercise. That would leave me open to criticism from those inside and outside the BBC who feel that such a personal style has no place in the world of news and current affairs'. (Keane, 1996: 9)

Better self-understanding is one of the goals of *All of These People*:

‘Writing this book I have also tried to answer some fundamental questions: why was I willing to risk my life repeatedly? How did war change me? Why did I go to the zones of death? I found that the motivations were as complex as the consequences’. (Keane, 2006: xiv)

There is a sense, for Keane, that news reporting moves on too quickly at the expense of grasping underlying truths:

‘When you are an eyewitness to history – whether in Rwanda, the Balkans, Northern Ireland – there is an immense sense of privilege, and also a sobering feeling of responsibility. Because one event is so quickly overtaken by another, because we work in mediums of startling immediacy – the world of twenty-four-hour rolling news and the internet – it is tempting to believe that what we say and write is quickly forgotten. The words themselves vanish before long, the truth they revealed or concealed, lasts long afterwards’. (Keane, 1999: xii- xiii)

His Rwandan autobiography stands out as being the most traumatic because it was beyond words, for him, beyond fact:

‘For me to make sense of that journey [Rwanda], however, I cannot write in terms of facts alone. So bear with me when the road runs down into the valleys of the heart and mind and soul’. (Keane, 1995: 3-4)

‘This book is the story of my own journey into the Rwandan genocide’.
(ibid: 4)

‘In writing about Rwanda, I am conscious that my words will always be unequal to the task of conveying the full horror of the crime of genocide’.
(ibid: 4)

7.3: Anthony Loyd

Loyd reveals in his first autobiography that he is in favour of proximate witnessing, not distant engagement that can lead to distortion. In *My War Gone By, I Miss it So*, he angrily disassociates himself with 'Johnny-come-lately' journalists:

'It was always difficult when people who had not been in the war started voicing their opinions on it. While I loathe the way some men act as if they are a kind of higher being simply because they have seen a bit of action, nothing is guaranteed to anger me more than some Johnny-come-lately who turns up when it is all over and starts getting large with the how's and why's. Listen to some of the revisionist junk spouted by the post-conflict generation of journalists and NATO representatives in Sarajevo and you begin to wonder if they are even talking about the same war'. (1999: 5)

So, he advocates distance from colleagues as a way of being open to the immediacy of the place, the people and the moment:

'As a stranger in the war only the present mattered as to how you were judged. Your past was irrelevant. In my desire to learn of war I sought only the cloak of anonymity in the community in which I lived'. (ibid.: 36)

He even goes so far as to try looking down the barrel of a rifle to experience how distance disables humanity and facilitates the ability to kill:

'I stopped breathing and pulled the sight closer to my eye. I wanted to pull the trigger, to erase the faceless shape in the sight. It would be no different from shooting sparrows as I had done in the garden as a child. It was not a question of killing; there seemed nothing human in the exchange, only the need to achieve a conclusion to the trigger-bullet-body equation. It would be so easy'. (ibid.: 34)

On the one hand, Loyd acknowledges his outsider status as a survival mechanism and a literal escape route:

‘For me there was always a way out. I could go to the airport, flash that UN ID card and get on a plane to Split. I could be in London the same day if I timed it right, and that knowledge protected me from the despair that affected Sarajevo’s people’. (ibid.: 22)

But, on the other, he recognizes that privileged outsiderliness, being able to don a flak jacket, was a shameful barrier to empathizing with local people caught up in the conflict:

‘After a time I discarded the bullet-proof vest I had bought in London. I had worn it because I was aware that it was easy to die in those streets – especially as a stranger new to the rules of fighting – and realized that life was not something to be treated flippantly there. Yet I soon found it more of a barrier, in my own mind at least, between myself and those who befriended me than between my body and bullets. Its heavy weight ceased to be reassuring and instead brought only shame to me in the presence of people I knew, people who had no avenue of escape. I began to leave it in the room in which I slept, where it finally gathered dust’. (ibid.: 22)

Over time, Loyd’s emotional engagement with suffering became fatigued, a kind of accumulation of and excessive exposure to trauma:

‘There was a time at the beginning of the war when my curiosity had often been tempered with sorrow, shock or horror at the sight of the state of bodies. Brutal mutilation would stick in my eyes like a thorn for days, or else the expression or posture of a corpse would evoke sadness and anger within me. But as you lose count of the number of dead you have seen, a hidden threshold of sensitivity is raised, neutralizing most of your reactions. Only the curiosity remains’. (1999: 6)

‘I did not learn to accept courage in a different form, I grew to see it as a meaningless term of glorification used by the ignorant to describe the action of others whose real motivations are more often instinctive than altruistic. So began the long winter retreat of emotion’. (ibid.: 91)

This numbing process was clearly a form of trauma for Loyd, although he does not use the word explicitly:

‘My emotions had lost their definition. It was not that I no longer missed those close to me, merely that I felt so detached as to be suddenly unaware of what I wanted or cared about outside the immediate realm of Bosnia, a kind of ongoing metamorphosis from which I had no way of knowing what would emerge’. (ibid.: 43)

The shared experience of suffering became a professional badge of recognition, a means of fitting in:

‘However sophisticated the veneer an individual wore, a little way beneath it you discovered personal tragedy and misfortune, the hungry appetite that motivated them to load up on more damage, each personal victory locking them further into defeat. Some carried the symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder like an inconsequential sidebar to a deeper malaise. They could fight and fuck one another with the abandon of delinquents in care, but they also looked after each other, linked by the altruistic camaraderie common to any pariah group. I fitted in just fine’. (ibid.: 82)

What seems to come out of Loyd’s first autobiography that was not as apparent in the interview is a sense of difference from ‘Johnny-come-lately’ journalists who did not seem to pay as close attention as him to the complexity of what was going on. They preferred to stick to revisionist, template, historical

narratives. He expresses ambivalence about his outsider status enabling him to resist despair, but also shame about this. His autobiography reinforces the sense of belonging he experienced with fellow journalists with regard to suffering. But what he did not disclose in the interview was a 'retreat from emotion'. Loyd reveals a much greater degree of vulnerability and helplessness in his autobiography than he did in my interview with him.

7.4: Jeremy Bowen

The prologue of Bowen's autobiographical book depicts the death of his friend and colleague, Abed Takkoush. This very poignant, arguably traumatic, event illustrates powerfully for Bowen the ethical dilemma of reporting others' suffering:

'For us to have a good day, someone else has to have a bad day, or the last day of their lives. To get the story, we had to be near them, with the camera rolling, at their worst or last moments, when the people they loved were killed, when their lives were so smashed by war that they wished they had died too. It makes journalists sound like vultures but it is the only way to do it, the only way to show what war does to people. Moving in on someone when they are that vulnerable is very intrusive. They can be suggestible and easy to manipulate, especially if you show a little human sympathy'. (2006: xviii-xvii)

Bowen, in his autobiography, draws attention to the fact that there is something exploitative about reporting traumatized survivors. This is enabled by a degree of objectification of victims to relay the 'real' story of war, an agency that deliberately separates and overrides local 'private' pain and suffering with a 'global' story for a distant audience:

'Reporters enter people's lives at their worst moments and intrude deeply into them. The only way to justify it is with the story that comes out of the

intrusion, by showing that it was worth doing because something has been exposed that was hidden. Intrusion produces very strong stories. Many of the best ones I have done would have been impossible without poking my nose into someone else's life when events have stripped them of every protection. I am not cynical about the suffering of people, and I have never faked sympathy, or wanted to; I have often had to fight my own emotions when I hear people's stories. As far as I know, all the colleagues I have respected are the same. My friend Allan Little – and there is no better journalist – told me that there were times when moving in on people at their worst moments made him feel like a pornographer, or a predatory animal. Scores, maybe hundreds of brief encounters with abject misery have left a nagging, uncomfortable feeling in me too. I am not a bad person, or a voyeur. But I know what makes a good story, and how to get it. In the end, that was why I was there [Bosnia], talking to them at their worst moments and persuading them to share their misery with my television camera'. (194)

Bowen maintains that it is possible to intrude and remain compassionate:

'I believe that I always treated people decently, with dignity. But their privacy was the last thing I thought about, because with strong pictures of misery and suffering and killing, which after all are what war is all about, I could tell the world what was happening. For years, I had believed strongly that what we did was worthwhile, and necessary, and that I was a witness, not a ghoul. I would have preferred misery and killing not to happen'.
(2006: xviii-xvii)

His self-reflexive view is a somewhat passive one, denying his own political agency:

'But since it was going on whether we were there or not, I wanted to be the one who showed it to the people back home. Abed, Malek and I made careers of reporting on other people's last days, or worst days. Now it was our turn: his last, our worst'.

In *War Stories*, Bowen refers to one incident in Bosnia where he threw out the objective rule book in favour of a political agency:

‘So for the only time in my life, I decided to manipulate a news story, to get Eldar and his family evacuated. Peter Kessler, the spokesman for the UNHCR, agreed to help, and provided a sound-bite saying that when you come to Sarajevo to evacuate wounded and sick children, you shouldn’t pick and choose. The lunchtime news ran my story about the baby who was being left behind and someone in Downing Street must have been watching. By mid-afternoon Mrs Kalamujic was smiling again. They were all going to London. The doctor had changed his mind and her baby had a chance’. (168)

It is interesting that post-event he attaches guilt to the affair because, as he sees it, he had given in to an ‘interventionary’ impulse:

‘Journalists’ motives are never pure in these matters either. We also intervene in people’s lives, telling ourselves that the upshot of it all will be positive. What right had I to play God when I decided to use my platform on BBC News to make sure that Eldar Kalamujic, the boy with liver failure, was evacuated?’ (169)

For Bowen, this partly led to him being accused by Douglas Hurd of being a political advocate over his reporting of Bosnia:

‘Douglas Hurd, the foreign secretary, dismissed journalists like me as “the something-must-be-done club”. But the fact remained that a festival of medical evacuation created a rosy glow, gave an impression of progress, and meant that the press would not be writing so much about the West’s failure, once again, to end the killing’. (169)

The above statement seems to be a revalidation for objectivity because reporting humanitarian progress can be construed as propaganda. Bowen reinforces this point by referring to reporting of the Israel/Palestine conflict as ‘victims having legitimacy’:

‘Makers and consumers of news broadcasts from Jerusalem should never forget that both sides [Palestinians and Israelis] – for different reasons, though often at the same time – want to be portrayed as victims. If they are, they believe they are more likely to get international sympathy, it is easier for them and their supporters to believe in the actions that they take to gain redress or revenge. Victims have legitimacy’. (ibid.: 237)

The death of Takkoush stands out as traumatic because, as Bowen makes clear, it is an unusual example of the asymmetrical tables of fortune being turned on him. For once, he and his more unfortunate colleague became the victims and part of the actual story they were supposed to be reporting. The incident has featured heavily in several of Bowen’s public discussions since the tragedy, as well as providing the opening to his autobiographical book. Two such events are the documentary he made in 2005, *On the Frontline* and more recently *Insight with Jeremy Bowen* at the Frontline Club. In my interview with Bowen, however, he did not refer to the incident as a traumatic one for him and preferred to talk about being ‘*emotionally affected*’ rather than traumatized by such events.

Traumatic experience does not make Bowen question his attachment to objectivity:

‘Of course, everyone starts from somewhere. No human being can be truly objective. It is impossible because we all have a series of experiences, from parents, from teachers, from what we have seen in the world, that shape the way we think. Every reporter, every morning, has to decide how to cover the story, and those decisions don’t come out of nowhere. But that does not make a journalist biased. If they are professional, and not lazy, then they have to recognize their own beliefs and prejudices and then put them to one side’. (124)

Bowen points out how the 'reality' of war can suck you in to such a degree that you lose perspective and reality becomes 'distorted':

'I have never stopped being disgusted and angered by the killing, by civilians being shelled or shot dead when they went out to try to earn some money, or find some food or water. But it happened every day and after a while it wasn't even news for the editors back in London, unless it took a particularly vicious twist. War distorts and perverts reality, and it had done that to mine too. One time Julia, my girlfriend, gave me another verbal shaking and told me to get a grip, to realize that London was real and Sarajevo was not. No, I told her, real life for me is not here, it's there, in Bosnia. Now it sounds deluded. But then I believed it'. (147)

Becoming too drawn in, too proximate, to war and suffering inhibits the distance necessary for analysis and explanation of context:

'It is also vital to remember the wider context, about why we got to where we are, and to explain all of that, or tales of suffering and death just become white noise, a mystifying drone of misery that makes people switch off. Too often during the war in Bosnia we were not clear enough about why the killing was happening, partly because in television, especially, we were frightened of trying to explain things. That taught me a lesson for the future, when after the war I moved on to the Middle East. It also created at times a false equality, a suggestion that the two sides were somehow equal because war's most fundamental truth is that it kills people, and the dead suffer equally: an amputated leg is an amputated leg, whoever lost it'. (150)

When Bowen meets a Bosnian sufferer distrustful of Bowen's motivation to film her story, he provides a complex explanation for journalistic agency that articulates more subjectivity than objectivity:

‘I would also have told her that journalists are not heroes, that they have all sorts of motivations for going to wars, from finding out the truth and telling it, to giving the poor and dispossessed a voice, to building their careers, or because they like being in a place with no rules. And I would have said that the same person can have all of that going on inside him at the same time, though I can also understand why she might not have wanted to listen’. (2006)

Like Loyd, Bowen is more philosophical in his autobiography than his interview, less dogmatic and more nuanced; for example, about trauma. He is able in his autobiography to elucidate the complex agency he has of furthering his career, exploiting the stories of survivors of war and conflict to broadcast a wider international news story to BBC viewers. *War Stories* confirms, however, his position on political ‘interventionary’ journalism as being undesirable, ‘lazy’ and ‘biased’.

7.5: Jon Snow

Most of the interviewees had either private or grammar school, also known as public school, not comprehensive secondary education. Many went on to Oxford or Cambridge. Out of all the interviewees, as the son of a bishop, Snow had arguably the most elitist start in life. According to his autobiography, his early success in life was largely dependent on the old-boy network, from school scholarship to first reporting job. His father was an Anglican clergyman, a bishop and the headmaster of the public school which Snow attended, Ardingly College. In his autobiography, Snow says:

‘My father was so rarely encountered, I called him ‘sir’ by mistake’. (2004: 25)

Snow refers to his early home life as ‘this familial wreckage’ (ibid.: 25), out of which emerged a rebellious streak. Snow did not pass all his ‘A’ levels. He was rusticated from Liverpool University for his part in a student protest about the university’s financial investment in Tate and Lyle, a company that had its own investment in apartheid South Africa. He then worked for a youth centre in Liverpool and wrote his first newspaper article, a compassionate socially aware piece about the premature death of one of the centre’s clients, Christine.

Snow regards journalism, compared to news presenting, as ‘the gold star’. Journalistic aspiration clearly fits with his formative political development. In my interview with him, Snow stated that that the best journalists were political ones and yet the five peers that he has the greatest admiration for are mostly, apparently, BBC journalists: Brian Barron, Martin Bell, Matt Frei, Allan Little and Janine di Giovanni. At the Frontline Club,³⁶ he stated:

‘We have an obligation to fill in the gaps, the gaps that governments don’t want to discuss’.

And:

‘We should wage a war on ignorance’.

This rhetoric is not dissimilar to that of John Pilger, a ‘political’ journalist who is not on Snow’s list of excellent practitioners. In the light of Snow’s proposed ‘war on ignorance’, I asked him what was different about his and Channel Four’s reporting of the Iraq War. His answer was that, relatively speaking, as a result of several public debates on the matter, Channel Four’s line on the war was regarded as anti-war. However, he concluded that, despite intentionality to be critical, Channel Four had ultimately failed to provide a discourse outside of the government-led rush to war. Interestingly, Snow claims in a postscript to his book that his formative politics have not changed over the years and this was one of his motivations for writing an autobiography:

³⁶ Frontline Club event, *Insight with Jon Snow*, 19/7/10.

‘Television journalism is a very constraining medium. You behave uncommonly well within its confines. I can’t easily explain it, but somehow you remain on your best behaviour. I hope this book has veered into the badly behaved. It is opinionated and far from neutral. Yet I also believe that the threat to mankind from the gathering hysteria surrounding our disordered world is real and menacing, that those of us who report it must break cover and declare it. That is what I have done; I regret none of it’.³⁷

Note his observation that what threatens the world today is an emotional phenomenon, hysteria, as much as a disordered world. The above revealing statement also demonstrates how important subjective agency is in interpreting not only objectivity, but also politics. Snow sincerely believes that he is at heart still a ‘badly behaved’ political journalist, but laments the fact that this is not possible in his television journalism. When he was asked by Vin Ray what he thought makes a good broadcast journalist, he gave the following answer:

‘The capacity to keep your ego under control, to wake up in the morning with ideas burning holes in your brain, to get angry, laugh, cry at the news of at least something first thing in the morning; to be inquisitive, nosey and politically motivated. All the best hacks in history have been motivated by the desire to see change. There is no such thing as a neutral journalist. We are all shaped by who we are but we should recognize who we are and counter it with a desire to reflect other views of events beyond our own. But we should never desert what we believe in and what drives us. If you meet a flaccid broadcast journalist, shoot him or her’³⁸.

After working for a centre for homeless young people in London at the behest of Lord Longford, he worked as a VSO volunteer in Uganda for a year, a country with which he ‘fell in love’.³⁹ He then started reporting in Uganda. When asked by Vin Ray what he did personally when reporting from ‘let’s say Africa’ to avoid a Western, white, northern hemisphere approach to his stories, he replied:

³⁷ <http://www.fifth-estate-online.co.uk/reviews/snowreview.html>; accessed 14/4/11.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Frontline Club event, *Insight with Jon Snow*, 19/7/10.

‘The fact that having lived for a year in Africa as equals, or even less than equal, because you’re learning all the time, I suppose you do try to look at it through the eyes of the people who live it rather than through the eyes of us’. (ibid.)

This compassionate approach was qualified with:

‘It’s very easy to go to developing countries, to say this is intolerable and the rest of it and to lose sight of how people live their lives’. (ibid.)

A salient practical example of Snow’s above advocacy, referred to above in Chapter Six, is his reasoned decision to report a Ugandan woman’s plight rather than provide immediate assistance. His compassion was there but had to be overridden by the greater good of Channel Four viewers.

Snow’s autobiography is strikingly different from someone like Keane’s in its presentation of self. It is part autobiography, part reportage and part historical analysis. It is replete with anecdotes of jolly derring-do. His numerous anecdotes demonstrate that he is the master of the scoop gained by quick decision-making. He seems not to be averse to physical risk-taking – lying on the Eritrean frontier and in Serbian-occupied Kosovo, accompanying Latin American guerrillas, rescuing fellow countrymen during the first Gulf War (with Robert Fisk). In fact, at the biographical Frontline event, he presented six examples of his foreign correspondent work, spanning his career from Uganda to Haiti. Of the examples, the three earliest ones were scoops, important, he claims, because he outdid the newsgathering competition. These three were an interview with Idi Amin, a report from Iran about a botched American hostage rescue operation that ended in catastrophe and a report from El Salvador during the Cold War. Snow described Amin as a ‘desirable dictator’ and told a humorous story of how he had had the opportunity to shoot Amin. This is the way he framed the story:

'I did have the opportunity to kill him which, in a way, is one of the things that confronts a journalist early on about what the limits of your journalistic responsibilities actually are'⁴⁰.

Contrast this example with another of his reports, presented at the Frontline Club, in which he interviewed Nelson Mandela, whom he described as a very wise man who, when he died, would be the most devastating loss of any living person in the world. The juxtaposition, for me, between Amin as monstrous, evil dictator and mass murderer with Mandela as a kind of shining star is, arguably, too stark. What about an African leader such as Robert Mugabe who was celebrated a few decades ago as a beacon of African emancipatory self-determination, now castigated as an evil tyrant? This is an example of the tendency, in the name of objectivity, to classify other national leaders as good or bad according to the prescription of British governmental foreign policy. Objective reporting has a closer relationship with national political agenda-setting than non-objective reporting.

With regard to trauma, Snow had the strongest view that any journalist who claimed he suffered from it '*needed his bottom wiped*'. When it comes to looking at the world 'through their eyes', the example of the Ugandan traumatized woman who feared for her family's lives seems to suggest that the story, the 'gripping' story, the scoop, comes first. When Snow reported the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans, he did manage to provide physical assistance for victims as well as produce a report that won a television award:

What I do have a sense of is that there are certain things which if you do, you may well get yourself into some difficulty. So, for example, one of the best pieces of advice I ever had was, 'never be seen holding a baby. Never touch anybody when you're doing a piece to camera'. Whatever you do off-camera, for God's sake, don't touch anybody on camera and don't carry anybody. Well, actually as a matter of fact, last year I broke it and I did carry people and I was on camera. But this again was in New Orleans where the rescue was so inadequate that, because we had a boat, we were one of the very few people who actually – we'd got a boat from Florida. It

⁴⁰ Frontline Club event, *Insight with Jon Snow*, 19/7/10.

wasn't as if we'd trotted round the corner, but we'd done something anybody could have done and we went into places where nobody had ever been. And there were people beseeching us with dying relatives and old people on medication, etcetera, to get them out. And, you know, if there's only you and the cameraman, you either have the choice to say to the cameraman, 'Put the camera down, we've got to get on and rescue these people', or you go on filming and I'll do as much as I can to get these people into our boat.

With regard to awards, Snow maintains that use of emotion is an essential element in garnering approbation:

I won in 1980, I think, Journalist of the Year, and then I won it last year [2005].⁴¹ And, therefore, I have managed to win it at both ends of the spectrum, and I would say that, on both occasions, the prize was awarded for emotional reasons. Because they were very emotional reports: the Pakistan earthquake, New Orleans, and something else, I don't know what – Africa.

Compared to his interview, Snow's autobiography confirms his ambivalence towards objectivity, politics and emotion. On the one hand, he has always seen himself as a political journalist and certainly aspires to be one. On the other, he admits that television is a constraining medium and that he (and Channel Four News) 'failed' to report Iraq in a critical, political way. Equally, he claims that he is emotional and that his autobiography is emotional, but there is very little personal emotion in his book, which does rather chime with his view that a journalist inclined to talk about trauma in his work is infantile or regressive.

⁴¹ He has won Royal Television Awards for reporting in Eritrea, Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq and El Salvador.

7.6: Fergal Keane

Keane is the most open of autobiographers (as well as interviewees) in terms of exploring, not resisting, links between his personal and professional life. In fact, as mentioned above, the chief purpose of *All of These People* is to make emotional connections between his early formative life in Ireland, his childhood, and his later foreign correspondent experience and identity:

‘When I look now at my journalism, at the preoccupations that have remained constant – human rights, the struggles for reconciliation in wounded lands, the impulse to find hope in the face of desolation – I know that I am largely defined by the experiences of childhood’. (2005: xii)

‘I too often saw the past through the prism of an angry, alienated child’.
(xii)

And that ‘prism’ seems to have been the seed for his deployment of subjectivity or complex agency. As stated above (in 7.2), one central connection is his father, a source of unresolved trauma as well as compassion:

‘When I tried to describe my journalistic life and world, I found my father waiting for me at every corner’. (xii)

‘For much of my adult life I had lived in confusion about my father: thoughts of him made me feel both angry and sad. I could never understand him or the manner in which our relationship had affected my life’. (xii)

His father had been an alcoholic as well as a famous actor, which had created a good deal of fear in Keane, as well as admiration. In fact, Keane attributes his compassionate nature to both his parents:

‘Their passionate natures and belief in justice were my formative inspiration. They were, above all, people of instinct. I doubt that either of them had a calculating bone in their bodies’. (xiii)

The second significant connection concerns place, that is, between Ireland and Africa. Here is how he describes his arrival in Africa:

‘I had visualized this moment so often when I was a boy back in Dublin, or later as a teenager in Cork, hunched over history books in the city library. I had constructed my dreams around this continent, a place to bury memories of rain and weakness’. (147)

‘I know that in order to live with my fears and anxieties, I created a parallel world in which I was brave and unafraid. (Many years later in different war zones I would enter a world where I would test my fear again and again)’. (56-7)

But the exotic draw of Africa turned out to be more familiar than he had expected:

‘I found that as I travelled the zones of conflict there was much that seemed familiar, echoes of the history of my own country’. (xii)

The pinnacle of this realization was Rwanda. Here is how he has described his experience there of the aftermath of genocide:

‘A huge thing that Rwanda changed for me is a fundamental optimism about humanity. When you see what people were capable of, the unspeakableness of which they were capable. The simple fact that there

was so much more evil than good, that there was so much more cowardice than bravery'.⁴²

But in his autobiography, published the following year:

'I believe there is more good in humanity than evil, and that we are capable of changing for the better. This is the continuing lesson of my personal life as much as the public sphere in which I have operated'. (xvi)

Rwanda was the most traumatic event in Keane's reporting career as well as the most testing time for his compassionate agency:

'For me the greatest consequence of life at war, particularly the Rwandan genocide of 1994, was a feeling of guilt'. (xii)

The most traumatic period was also a period of compassion fatigue:

'Yet I found the longer I stayed on the road the more I became aware of the psychological backwash of war. This, of course, touched the participants and the victims most of all, but for the professional witnesses there was also a high price to be paid, not mitigated by the fact that we had chosen to put ourselves in the line of fire'. (xiv)

In the interview as well as in *All of These People*, Keane stressed the importance of motivation in journalistic agency:

'I had come through several traumatic personal experiences and arrived at middle age – at a time when men often collide with their limitations and feel the first chill of mortality. I needed to take stock of where I had come

⁴² <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/ghosts/video/>; made in 2004; accessed 3/1/11.

from, examine the influences that had formed me, and to look at where I might be going. There were also certain resolutions to be made in the way I lived my life. Chiefly they concerned the risks I was taking in different conflict zones of the world'. (xii)

To update Keane's biography, in 2006 he gave up being a foreign correspondent because:

'I didn't want to get killed. I was scared out of my wits. After a long time of not being. You naturally feel fear, but as a younger man I never felt mortal fear. I didn't go out thinking: this could be the day. But I got to a point where I did feel that, almost as a certainty, and I hated it. You might say I lost my nerve. I would put it a different way: I got a dose of common sense'.⁴³

His latest work is a kind of return to his roots, a historical documentary called *Story of Ireland*.

7.7: John Simpson

As argued above, Simpson's staunch position on the desirability of objective complex agency in order to avoid manipulation makes him wary of compassionate or traumatic disclosure. However, his autobiography reveals two episodes in his personal biography that departed from his customary practice. The first concerns his reporting of Tiananmen in 1989:

'The Square [Tiananmen] virtually became my home for the next month. I came to love the students who took it over and the thought of their death

⁴³ <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/books/7615097/Fergal-Keane-Jesus-I-just-want-to-have-more-fun.html>; accessed 15/4/11.

at the hands of the Chinese army still affects me, years later'. (Simpson, 1998: 313)

'Even then, I think I discerned some of the qualities which I later came to regard with such tenderness about the Tianenmen students: their naïveté, their gentleness and spontaneity, the delight they felt in being free of restrictions for once in their lives. They were often hopelessly ignorant of the world and its ways. They certainly had very little idea indeed of the one thing they had come here to demand: democracy'. (ibid.: 314)

It is noteworthy that this somewhat uncharacteristic emotional admission is written in a chapter whose title is 'Undermining Marx'. This appears to be a conscious ideological alignment with liberal capitalism. Brayne had a similar experience which, in his words, led to his judgement going 'quite seriously out of the window'. Simpson's emotionally empathic experience with young pro-democracy Chinese campaigners also became tinged with trauma:

'I sat at the computer, numbed by everything I had seen and determined not to get too emotional about it. I'd made friends among the students in Tiananmen Square'. (ibid.: 330)

'I have written a good deal about the Tiananmen Square massacre, but it remains a perpetually painful subject for me'. (ibid.: 323)

Simpson regretted leaving Tiananmen:

'But it felt like an act of desertion, and I regret it to this day'. (ibid.: 327)

He even felt that he used objectivity to mask his emotion:

‘And so I took refuge in the old BBC concepts of balance and objectivity: there wasn’t an ounce of emotion in my script’. (ibid.: 330)

As Bowen mentions the traumatic death of his friend and colleague, Abed Takkoush, in his autobiography, one might have expected Simpson to mention the violent death of his translator in Iraq (2003), the result of an American bomb dropping merely yards away from him, but there is no mention of the episode in Simpson’s latest autobiography. It is, of course, a subject about which he was prepared to answer questions in my interview with him.

The other outstanding event in Simpson’s life, which he claims ‘altered his entire outlook’ was the birth of his son, Rafe, in 2007:

‘Rafe has altered my entire outlook on the world, in a way which I will explain in the pages that follow’. (Simpson, 2007: x)

This is how it altered his experience of Baghdad, Iraq:

‘When I walk along the pavement, the people I pass appear to me in an altogether different light from the way they once did. It must sound horribly corny, but each of them seems to have a quality, a value I have never appreciated before. Life itself is what matters – not who owns it. Fatherhood has changed me completely’. (ibid. 151)

‘But during every visit to Baghdad since Rafe was born I have become more and more enraged by the effects of violence and aggression, whether from an American soldier or a suicide bomber. The dead teenager, this dismembered woman, this old man groaning in the gutter could be my own child. Who could do such violence to the most precious thing there is: life itself?’ (ibid.: 152)

Simpson's profound 'change' due to the birth of his son did not dent his objective agency, even when reporting a story, which apparently made him angry, the kidnapping and cold-blooded murder of an Iraqi government driver:

'That evening, as the three of us sat editing our pictures, I couldn't think of anything to say over the image of a little girl reaching up to wipe the tears from her grandmother's eyes. Any words of mine were bound to be banal. Worse, they might seem manipulative, the kind of thing television reporters say over scenes of suffering, trying to wring a little extra sympathy out of the people back home'. (ibid.: 398)

Simpson, in his autobiographies, does address personal emotional issues but he also did so in my interview with him. He claims that recent fatherhood has radically changed how he looks at people caught up in conflict in his work. However, he still resists the kind of emotion in his work that he believes could be construed as eliciting sympathy for victims.

7.8: Conclusion

This chapter has set out to explore, in the authors' own words, why five of the interviewees have taken it upon themselves to write autobiographies. What has emerged is a more reflective account of their agencies, some personal insights that they cannot or do not want to insert into their news reports. Loyd, Bowen, Simpson and Snow employ the medium to explore nuanced emotional angles that attempt to connect the personal with the professional. In some cases, like Loyd, Bowen and Simpson, what emerges is ambivalence about their roles, but by no means an overturning of their objective ideals in favour of self-consciously political ones. Snow, for example, wants us to know that he has not lost his political drive that goes back to his heady university days, but that the medium of television constrains this. Keane, the least 'objective' of the five interviewee autobiographers, seems to draw a line under his more youthful, emotional exploits and expresses a more conservative desire to retire from mortal fear and danger.

Pilger, Fisk and O’Kane have not written autobiographies. Is this because their complex agencies allow them to employ more political and subjective agency, more autobiographical voices in their actual reports and documentaries? Their books mirror the complex agency of objective journalists, providing alternative histories and historical truths to complicate and subvert the power of objective history.

By comparing James Cameron’s rationale, stated in the Foreword to his 1967 autobiography (see above), with contemporary BBC correspondents’ autobiographies, written three to four decades later (Simpson’s, Bowen’s and Keane’s), it is clear that there has been a significant cultural shift in the understanding of emotion in foreign correspondence. This involves a crack in the smooth, ideal edifice of objectivity, a crack that indicates a human interruption in the correspondence between journalist and available material for constructing international news. This crack is barely visible for Simpson and Snow and is quite deep for Keane. Bowen and Loyd lie somewhere in the middle, but tend to cluster nearer Simpson’s ‘objective’ end of the continuum than does Keane.

However, Moorhead’s autobiography, published at the end of the Second World War, reveals that less dry, more emotional, first-hand approaches to reporting conflict, in particular war, existed long before Cameron. So, it could be said that the use of emotion in foreign correspondence is like a pendulum, which swings backwards and forwards over time from the dry, disengaged to the emotional, engaged. But what I hope my research demonstrates is that it is not only a matter of history. From 2001 (Sreberny and Paterson (Eds.), 2003: 3-30), there was a state-driven national American crisis, as a reaction to a powerful external threat, that reversed the polarities of objective and political journalism. During national critical periods, such as America’s 9/11, elite institutional journalists such as Snow and Simpson set the national agenda in much the same way as it was set by BBC journalists reporting the IRA conflict in the 1980s. In moments of historical national crisis, the threat, the Other, is so imminent, proximate and immediate that complex agency is shifted around. This officially allows more subjective, emotional deployments of agency that are celebrated by and talked about by Fisk in the context of the Second World War, and that he has incorporated into his journalistic practice. Such emotional deployments of agency are bound to be more traumatic

and less compassionate towards the Other when the nation and its culture is under threat, when cultural trauma engulfs a nation-state.

I would tentatively suggest that the more 'objective' journalists, with the exception of Keane, appear to be the ones that produce autobiographies, although this is by no means exclusively the case. Those who have not written autobiographies, reading between the lines, tend to regard the proposition as self-indulgent and interfering with the mediation of truth. That is why some of the 'non-autobiographers' have written historical and political books, different, not objective, deployments of subjectivity and truth.

What journalistic autobiographies reveal is complex agency itself. Although they are not reports broadcast on television or printed in newspapers, they are published for a mass audience. They provide a different perspective, with the benefit of time, on the events that had been originally reported. They demonstrate that journalism can be a deeper process than momentary observation, a process pushed by traumatic, compassionate and care-of-self (therapeutic) elements.

Chapter Eight: Conclusion

8.1: Objectivity and emotion

In answering Research Question One, Chapter Four of this thesis articulated a great tension and gap in British foreign correspondent elite discourse between objectivity-as-value and objectivity-as-institutional-practice when reporting war, conflict and trauma; between knowing the game (intellectually) and experiencing the game. Chapter Four revealed that the mainstay paradigm of the Western Enlightenment project, objectivity, is currently deconstructing in British foreign correspondent discourse. Objectivity, as an elitist professional norm within journalistic practice, is splitting and decentring into (subjective) truth-as-value and compassion-as-value, agencies that try to politically activate the self in the Other and the Other in the self. Four of the exceptions to the institutional game who prove the rule, Little, Keane, O’Kane and Pilger, are challenging objective discourse.

Objectivity as the most prevalent rule of the institutional game bisects another significant rule of the game of foreign correspondence, that of the deployment of outsiderliness or strangerhood, by virtue of its detachment and decision to not engage emotionally or politically with sufferers of trauma. It constitutes a radical deployment of selfhood that tends towards being reflexive and narcissistic rather than Other-reflexive. Objectivity, according to Schudson (1990) and Tuchman (1972), was operationalized in the early twentieth century as a strategic ritual to distinguish institutional journalism from competing more overtly political forms of journalism. But the traumatic flaw in this professional project, this institutional embrace of objectivity, as usefully elucidated by Bourdieu (2000), is that the professional journalist (the agent), operating in the field of foreign correspondence (habitus), is never completely the subject of his practices.

All respondents agree that deployment of emotion to report conflict and trauma is necessary but intuitive or instinctual. This, in their views, conforms to a reflexive agency. For them, the primary question is whether the event they are reporting warrants a degree of emotion. If so, then they engender a necessary

emotion that is normally privately reserved. With regard to reflexivity, the problem here is that reflexivity (self-witnessing or self-mediation) involves an objectification of self that stands back from the self in order to monitor the self, as if from the outside. The danger, of course, is the fine line between reflexivity and narcissism. It was argued in Chapters Six and Seven that narcissism constitutes an awkward rule of the game, easy to perceive in others than to self-avow. From a political economic perspective, narcissism can lead to formulaic, template journalism, repeatedly diagnosing the patient, not realizing that the analyst's or therapist's dispositional role is also part of the disease

8.2: Trauma

The first part of Chapter Five answered Research Question Two. Trauma is a concrete, particular, local Real experience, the great unwashed Other of the clinically clean, the dark Shadow of objective discourse. Therefore, it is important to understand and feel with sufferers and suffering in order to drive a negative dialectic that drives Otherness, and shields Otherness from 'Enlightened' instrumental reason. Chapter Five argued that trauma, as a rule inside and outside the game, involves affective interruption of the ordered structure of institutional 'rules of the game'. Journalistic trauma is a subjective and cultural response to extreme violence and trauma suffered by the subjects of foreign correspondent reports. As an interruption, it regressively causes dissociation, detachment, deferral, denial, disordering and decentering. Journalistic trauma subverts objective discourse by exposing the false border or split between the vulnerability of the observer and the vulnerability of the observed, collapsing the subject/object discourse. The interview data demonstrated that television correspondents, working in the period 1990 to 1994, were particularly exposed to traumatic experience in their work. This was testified by Brayne, Little, Keane, Loyd and O'Kane.

All the respondents interviewed who have experienced trauma have succeeded in recalibrating their emotional engagement with human trauma and, through therapeutic processes of life-narrative writing and an informal, personal,

talking cure, have reclaimed their traumatic experiences. Only one respondent, Little, believed the institution of the Dart Centre for Journalism and Trauma had been successful in its aims to 'therapeutize' conflict journalism. Most other views were negative or indifferent.

The second part of Chapter Five (through Research Question Three) demonstrated how elite British foreign correspondents demonstrate that 'distance' (and proximity) are constituted when they witness traumatic events. Frosh and Peters (2009) provide a useful theoretical binary for witnessing, that of civil attention and bodily testimony. The empirical research data of this thesis has built on and complicated that binary. The dual models of witnessing traumatic conflict and war as a form of embodied compassionate engagement and witnessing as a form of rational objectivity also fit the binary model summarized above for institutional 'rules of the game', that tension between a feeling, embodied, holistic self and an instrumental, rational self. For some respondents, compassionate engagement is a 'fantasm of inclusion', which denies the reality of human violence and exclusion, the traumatic Real. Detractors of compassionate agency regard it as a form of false consciousness. But, for proponents of emotional attachment, the exclusion of intimacy with sufferers of trauma is symptomatic of a self-alienated culture in denial of its own trauma and its propensity for violence and exploitation. This research finding is carried across from Chapter Five to Chapter Six.

I have built on Caruth's formulation of trauma as 'reality or truth that is not otherwise available' or 'the feel of truth' (1996); and Meek's notion of trauma constituting a boundary between individual and culture (2010). I have also built on Muhlmann's theory of 'decentring' journalism (2008) as a form of re-centring trauma as not only distantly over there (for audiences) but also here and there (for certain foreign correspondents). With regard to gender, most of the respondents regarded their constitutions of gender as unimportant with regard to their practices of reporting conflict and trauma. However, as a researcher outsider to the interviewee group, it did seem to me that there was a curious reversal in the group between Little claiming the importance of discussion of trauma and vulnerability and 'hard-hearted' Hilsum claiming rather that journalistic trauma is a narcissistic, intrusive indulgence.

I have built on Hoskins' binary of time as an immediate, more subjective experience and '*longue durée*' time (2004), as an 'objective' draft of History. The

compression or truncation of time for foreign correspondent practice narrows the gap of reflexivity, Other-reflexivity, between acting and decision-making. It isolates individual reporters' experience from the stories in an institutional bid to conceal objectivity through 'immediacy'. It encourages journalistic trauma and affect, while at the same time inhibiting Real, compassionate emotional engagement with the suffering others of the breaking story, producing 'false' affect as well as trauma. Truncation of time disallows the deployment of self through experience in favour of a more regressive agency.

Trauma is a deconstruction of organized human experience, a disruption of ontological security and routine emotional attachment to the professional ideal of objectivity.

8.3: Emotional attachments

Chapter Six (through Research Question Four) explained how foreign correspondent emotional attachments are regarded as prejudices or biases by some respondents. On the other hand, the proponents of emotional engagement, as argued above, mirror or double the objectivists by claiming that objective practice is false and biased towards power elites. This is what Elias calls 'a double bind' (Elias and Scotson, 1994: xxxi). Tester usefully expands:

'The established need the outsiders to confirm the sense of virtue that is metaphysically unknowable yet sensed as being challenged by social change, and the outsiders seek moral and even material recognition from the established groups who otherwise would withhold it. This implies a power balance that is permanently shifting, never stable. By extension it points to the inevitable fragility of all networks of interdependence. They are fragile because they involve power struggles'. (Tester, 2013: 61)

In terms of 'rules of the game', reflexive attachment to the Other is still a rule, a convention, a norm, a preference.

For all the press respondents except Melvern (Loyd, O’Kane, Fisk and Pilger) and two television respondents (Keane and Little to a certain extent), feeling the game is a necessary political deployment of subjectivity that leads to truth. For television respondents such as Brayne, Bowen, Simpson, Little, Snow and Hilsum, objectivity remains a challenging but necessary ideal and practice. For Robertson, feeling the game is more politically ‘objective’ than how he understands his BBC peers’ deployment(s) of objectivity, which he construes as partial, prejudicial and power elitist.

For Fisk and Pilger, objectivity as an institutional rule of the game is an agency of acting as stenographers of power instead of monitoring power. They advocate a more interventionist, activist approach: speaking truth to power, feeling the plight of sufferers of war and allotting more time to victims of power. I call their agency *Other-reflexive* because it creates a space for ‘an environment of action’ (Tester, 2013: 84), which can influence as much as it is influenced. I call this transitional space between self as subject and object ‘complex agency’. For all respondents, objectivity-as-practice and feeling the story are not mutually exclusive models of agency when it comes to reporting crises, war and trauma. This is the complexity of elite foreign correspondents who are celebrated exponents of the institutional game and craft of foreign correspondence.

Tester provides a useful model of journalistic agency split between the institutional demand of sensationalism and the rule of the institutional game of objectivity. Tester (2003) and Boltanski (1999) both provide interesting models of ‘real’ and ‘fictional’ emotion. Chouliaraki (2006) provides an intriguing model of ‘the duality of agency’ as ‘simultaneously theatrical emotion and agoraic deliberation’. I have also built on Moeller’s formulation of compassion fatigue (1999) as an undesirable rule of the institutional game. I hope that the empirical interview data has enriched and complicated the above theoretical binaries.

8.4: The dialectics of experience

In answer to Research Question Four, it was argued in Chapter Seven that a subjective deployment of alienation, *Other-reflexivity*, a hermeneutics of the

subject, is for some a more fruitful methodology of accessing truth. I like to call this ethical methodology the dialectics of experience. For others, such a political project is prone to a prejudicial 'fantasm of inclusion' which, ultimately, also produces exclusion. One might call this the deconstruction of the Oedipus complex into the Narcissus complex.

What the complex of fourteen life narratives underlines is sophisticated competing pictures of introspection and complex agency. Adorno *pace* Hegel, a modernist thinker, argues that conceptualization fails if it does not meet the object:

'That the subject may not simply content itself with the mere adequacy of its judgements to the state of affairs judged derives from the fact that judgement is not a mere subjective activity, the truth itself is not a mere quality of judgement; rather, in truth, something always prevails that, although it cannot be isolated, cannot be reduced to the subject'. (Adorno, 1963: 39)

This formulation by Adorno echoes to an extent Bourdieu's theory that the agent can never completely be the subject of his/her practice, as well as Derrida's idea that deconstruction deconstructs itself without the conscious organization of a subject (2002).

Lau importantly theorizes the push-and-pull complex relationship between objectivity and autobiography, which is verified by all the research materials. Gilmore (2001) similarly articulates the limits of autobiographical discourse in an institutional world. Foucault (2005), Derrida (in Smith, 1995) and Wittgenstein (in Hagberg, 2008) articulate the hermeneutics of the self, the 'fantasm of inclusion' and competing mental models of introspection; all these three models are evident in the autobiographies as well as the empirical interview data. All of the five theoretical contributions above support the central research finding of this thesis, that of complex agency.

8.5: Life narratives

The chapter design of this thesis is constructed to represent a narrative of foreign correspondent discourse from institutional ‘rules of the game’, to trauma, to emotional attachments, to life narratives. Objectivity, trauma, compassion and self are all ideal agencies that are complexly enmeshed in ‘real’ journalists’ lives. This thesis underlines the radical agency of Other and self, that complexly bind each other through individual journalists. I hope the reader will see the circularity as well as the linearity of the academic narrative. I also hope the exegesis of this thesis constitutes a puncturing of the Anglo-Saxon cultural tendency to binarize theoretical models, evident in the media analytic literature.

The main theoretical thread of the thesis operationalizes Bourdieu’s concept of ‘habitus’ (2000), Giddens’ concept of ‘structuration’ (1982) and Lasch’s concept of narcissism (1979). The tensions between agency and structure, between reflexivity and narcissism have been exemplified in the research data. The culmination of the theoretical binaries makes a strong case for complex agency as an environment of action that deploys the journalistic self in diverse ways, according to subjective constitutions of institutional ‘rules of the game’, trauma, emotional attachments, moral loyalties and life influences. Such a complex picture builds on the creative theoretical space that Bourdieu, Giddens and Lasch have activated.

Complex agency builds on Tuchman’s theory of objectivity as strategic ritual (1972) and Markham’s investigation of war correspondents’ dispositional ethics as ‘internal hierarchies’, unspoken rules (2011). I trust that my thesis constitutes a post-structural deconstruction of centrism in British elitist foreign correspondent discourse as well as academic discourse. This tortuous double-bind between ‘inside’ and ‘outside’ is evident in the ‘habitus’ of the fourteen respondents. I am reminded of Marx’s quotation that the radical root of mankind is man; in other words, to access the root of agency, man has to look at himself in some kind of a strange loop. And this self is an ongoing project, a zone of proximal development, that traumatically exceeds institutional rules as well as emotional attachments, a developmental project but not in the Darwinian evolutionary sense, where species progress is blind and unconscious. Such a discourse fits only too easily within liberal capitalist discourse. A more radical and desirable outlook is one that takes

traumatic account of how our radical selves become co-opted by the Enlightenment project, deadening our human capacity for ideal love and compassion.

8.6: Limitations of this research and future projects

Colonial practice sedimented conflict, hegemonically centring it as outside, as part of a political project to separate differences geographically and discursively, to divide and rule. In Foucauldian discursive terms, colonial discourse delegitimized other political non-objective discourses by rendering them false and attributing them to an external Other. This project potentially proves that such embedded structural power relations are coming undone in British foreign correspondent discourse through multiple forms of competing agencies and subjectivities. My research demonstrates that new articulations or links between objective agency and subjectivity are emerging; new formulations of inside-outside discourse. The interview findings demonstrate that there is a discernible turn in how British foreign correspondents constitute their practice of objectivity. It is because borders are drawn that people actively seek differences and become acutely aware of their presence. Differences are products of borders, of the activity of separation, of the historical practice of alienation in the form of colonialism discourse. Evidence for the subjective turn, for deconstruction, has been discovered in the profound ambivalence within the research group towards power, they speak as insiders with outsiders' self-images. The ideal of self-as-outsider was validated by all fourteen respondents.

I believe that objective discourse is deeply embedded within colonialist and imperialist discourse, although I accept that colonialist discourse is not one of my research questions, let alone my interview questions, so not part of this PhD. But, I wish to take the opportunity in this Conclusion to connect what this project was not about with what I hope my future projects will be about. My tendency to expand my research findings into colonialist and imperialist discourse is symptomatic of my expansive research writing approach. Like most things in life, an expansive approach has advantages and disadvantages. For postdoctoral research in the future, I would like to continue my semi-structured interview methodology to home

in on the relationship between colonialist and imperialist discourse and foreign correspondence in a more concentrated, forensic fashion. I would like to do this by interviewing younger and non-British foreign correspondents, as well as, if possible, re-interviewing some of my fourteen respondents for this project.

Where complex agency differs from Tester's theoretical split between objectivity and sensationalism in the journalistic habitus or professional field is that I believe sensationalism as a capitalist news value does not subvert objectivity at all. I believe this thesis has demonstrated that, if anything, capitalist and objective discourses are mutually reinforcing. I believe it was Einstein that said that (I paraphrase) while real value cannot be measured, usually that which can be measured has little value. This is the traumatic tension at the heart of this thesis, the fact that commercial, sensational international journalism is designed to maximize the capitalist value of audience size and profit, so meeting the cost of everything but offering the value of nothing. It de-ethicalizes the Other through its moral blindness. It instrumentalizes human trauma for commercial gain and vicarious audience pleasure, destroying the possibility of making Real, compassionate connections with suffering Others. This thesis has complicated the boundary between objectivity and sensationalism because it has posited limitations and constraints in all discourses, institutional, independent, compassionate and autobiographical. What is unique to this project is that it contextualizes and exposes the strengths and constraints of elite British foreign correspondent discourse across the political spectrum without taking sides.

As I set out in the introduction, this writing constitutes part of a wider popular cultural movement of emotionalization and personalization of politics. We have entered a *zeitgeist* in which maybe one of the most fundamental gifts of human and animal, creaturely emotional experience, *pace* Agamben (1998), the biopoliticization of human bodies, *pace* Foucault, our primal life force, some might say libidinal energy, is being sucked into a capitalist vortex, the corporate mass media, in which we struggle to differentiate between true and false emotion, between truth and simulation. At the very time that we are being interpellated as emotional beings who should enjoy our symptoms, the vicariousness of embodied emotional experience is being diagnosed as vulnerability that must be prescribed medication as well as mediatization. In other words, our infantilized egos are coerced into regressively accepting that our very emotions are problematic, that

the sites of our emotions and affects, our bodies, are not to be trusted and need to be neutralized by institutional power and faceless authority.

It has been a profound privilege for me to meet and work with fourteen celebrated British exponents of foreign correspondence. As an academic outsider to the journalistic game, they responded to me with overwhelming generosity, each offering me their invaluable time and powerful insights. I hope the results of my research project measure up to their considerable achievements. What I have also gained from them is a powerful awareness of the intractable political problems of international journalism today and, to a degree, of international relations *per se*. The project has furnished me with an indomitable spirit to face those problems through professional integrity and subjective agency. In the darkness of war, conflict, crisis and trauma, I hope all my interviewees will join me and agree that:

‘It is a privilege to see the Darkness’.

But that, surely, is merely the beginning.

Appendices

Appendix One: Interview Protocol

1. What training programmes did you undertake, if any, before entering the field of foreign correspondence?
2. *A Columbia Journalist Review (CJR)* intern as a lead-in question about OBJECTIVITY:

A Columbia Journalism Review intern, calling newspaper letters-page editors to learn whether reader letters were running for or against the looming war in Iraq, was told by the letters editor at *The Tennessean* that letters were running 70% against the war, but that the editors were trying to run as many pro-war letters as possible lest they be accused of bias (Cunningham, 2003).

3. Do you have a self-image of foreign correspondent as outsider?
4. Allan Little in Bosnia, Fergal Keane in Rwanda, Stephen Sackur in Halabja (Northern Iraq), Ben Brown reporting the Asian Tsunami have all experienced highly-charged professional moments when something personal was demanded of them? Have you had a similar experience?
5. Have you experienced trauma, either reporting traumatized subjects of your report or you yourself? Did it affect your reporting?
6. The Dart Centre for Journalism and Trauma. Do you know it, use it, subscribe to its aims?
7. What do you think is the effect of time truncation, especially in this 24-hour news era?
8. What is the difference between a professional witness and a naïve informant?
9. Do you have a sense that news production is becoming more 'feminized'?
10. Is emotion something you think about in your work?

11. Does war journalism have a particular emotional valency?

12. Diane Johnstone quotation:

‘In reality, trying to be fair and analytical does not at all preclude feeling sympathy for victims, and other human emotions. But for some writers, their emotional commitment seems to exclude all fairness and reasonable analysis. Whatever the political aims of such writers, a matter I cannot judge, their militant rejection of dispassionate analysis can only play into the hands of political powers who cloak their military interventions in the rhetoric of humanitarian imperatives’.

To what extent do you accept her analysis?

13. What do you think of the following analogy for conflict reporting:

A doctor who, I'm not comparing journalism with medicine, but a doctor who has to deal with someone who has been terribly wounded in a bomb doesn't stand in the operation room weeping. He tries to save the person. When I see the most terribly wounded or murdered or amputated people, I want to get the story of what happened to them, the injustice, the shame, the outrage. (Fisk, 2006)

14. Chris Cramer, CNN International's managing director, suggested as much in an article published in *The Australian's* Media section on January 27:

‘What has been different about much of the reporting, particularly on TV, has been that the emotional attachment between reporter and victim has been obvious. Gone is the professional, some might say artificial, detachment ... Now, for the first time, media professionals are starting to tell us how they feel about some stories. And it will probably make them better journalists’.

15. What is your opinion of celebrity journalism?

16. Questions asked to individual respondents tailored to particular autobiographies or biographical information, e.g. experience of reporting in Bosnia for Little, O’Kane and Loyd; experience of reporting in Rwanda for Hilsum and Keane; the death of Bowen’s friend and colleague, Abed Takkoush on the Israel/Lebanon border?

17. What do you think is the role of experience and personal development in your work?

18. What is your feeling on Keane’s ‘heightened’ emotion, Simpson’s Iraq ‘blood on the lens’ experience (2003), Fisk’s near death beating in Afghanistan in 2001?

Appendix Two: Interviewee Profiles

Date of interview	Name	Gender	Age (in 2013)	Current Position	Education	Training/ Experience
10/4/06	Mark Easton	Male	54	Home Editor, BBC News	Peter Symonds Grammar School, Winchester	Local newspaper Radio BBC TV
3/5/06	Fergal Keane	Male	52	Special correspondent, BBC	Independent Dublin/Cork schools	Local newspaper National newspaper RTE BBC Author
15/5/06 18/10/06	Allan Little	Male	54	Special correspondent, BBC	Edinburgh University (History & Politics)	BBC local radio trainee reporter (1986: 1 yr) 3-month Radio Solent work placement 1988, BBC <i>Today</i> programme. No specific foreign correspondent training
7/6/06	Maggie O'Kane	Female	n/a	Editorial director of Guardian Films (former <i>Guardian</i> foreign correspondent)	Loreto Convent School UC Dublin (History & Politics)	One-year journalism course (no specific foreign correspondent training)
26/6/06	Linda Melvern	Female	n/a	Investigative Journalist	N/A	<i>Evening Standard</i> <i>Sunday Times</i> Investigative journalist Author

Date of interview	Name	Gender	Age (in 2013)	Current Position	Education	Training/ Experience
5/7/06	Anthony Loyd	Male	47	War correspondent, <i>The Times</i>	St Edmunds School; Eton College	NO TRAINING Royal Green Jackets soldier War photographer Reporter <i>Daily Telegraph</i> ; <i>The Times</i> Author
10/7/06	Robert Fisk	Male	67	Foreign correspondent, <i>The Independent</i>	Yardley Court Preparatory Sutton Valence School Lancaster University PhD Pol Sci Trinity College, Dublin, 1983	NONE <i>Sunday Express</i> Belfast Correspondent for <i>The Times</i> 1972-5 Middle East Correspondent 1976-88 Author
11/9/06	Jon Snow	Male	66	Channel Four News presenter (former foreign correspondent)	Ardingly College (independent school) St Edwards School, Oxford Liverpool Uni (Law): rusticated	NO TRAINING 1973, LBC 1976, ITN reporter 1989 C4 for cspdt & main presenter Author
23/10/06	Lindsey Hilsum	Female	55	International Editor, Channel Four News	Worcester Grammar School Uni of Exeter (French & Spanish)	NONE Author

Date of interview	Name	Gender	Age (in 2013)	Current Position	Education	Training/ Experience
17/7/06	Nic Robertson	Male	51	Senior International Correspondent, CNN	N/A	Satellite engineer, CNN, 1989 Producer Reporter
13/11/06	Jeremy Bowen	Male	53	Middle East Editor, BBC News	Cardiff High School University College London, BA History Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced Int'l Stds, Washington	N/A
22/1/08	John Simpson	Male	69	World Affairs Editor, BBC News	Dulwich College Prep School; St Paul's School Magdalene College, Cambridge	1966 Trainee sub-editor, BBC radio news 1970 BBC reporter 1988 World Affairs Editor Author
12/3/08	Mark Brayne	Male	63	Psychotherapist (former BBC radio foreign correspondent)	2 nd School? BA Uni Leeds DeMontfort Uni Transpersonal Counselling & Psychotherapy	1973/4 Reuters Graduate Trainee
11/4/08	John Pilger	Male	74	Investigative journalist and filmmaker (former foreign correspondent)	Sydney Boys High School	Student newspaper 4-Yr Trainee scheme with Australian Consolidated Press 1958 Copy boy, <i>Sydney Sun</i> Freelance reporter 1963, <i>Daily Mirror</i> , chief foreign correspondent 1969- present, documentary film-maker Author

Appendix Three: History of News Production Research

The history of analysis of the journalistic process has moved through a number of different paradigms and sets of assumptions since the Second World War. The earliest research was mostly and essentially (with the exception of Lang and Lang, and Breed) of participant observation, ethnographic in nature, focusing on 'micro' elements, primarily editors' agency but not the agency of journalists themselves.

Perhaps the best known, earliest example of news production research was by David Manning White (1950). He conducted a piece of local newspaper research based on an individual editor's personal, subjective views on selectivity, but at the expense of examining the wider organizational context of newsmaking. This is a potential drawback of research on journalistic agency. Lang and Lang took a simple, 'objective' approach to television audiences in 1953, which essentially regarded the audience as passive and was oblivious to any notion of social construction and agency. Here, it could be suggested that newsmakers' perception of audience needs also represents a potential constraint. In 1955, Warren Breed looked at the wider process of how news organizations socialize reporters to adhere to policy. From his research, he discovered that reporters had developed means to resist policy and present a more 'objective' picture: for example, journalistic codes, the professional leadership of journalism schools, the newspaper union and 'sincere criticism'. However, he still maintained that, on balance, 'the cultural patterns of the newsroom produce results insufficient for wider democratic needs'. Contrary to the results of White's research and more in line with Breed's, Walter Gieber's research of 1956 focused on editors as gatekeepers, where he concluded that mechanical constraints relate to routine and professional relations rather than individual, personal value judgements. Thus, individual journalistic agency was deemed to be superseded by organizational, institutional agencies.

Following Gieber's work there was a historical turn towards the macro/instrumental end of the news production continuum which manifested itself in the following two decades. The late 1960s and 1970s brought in a whole new body of sociological and political scientific research informed by and informing a popular progressive movement for civil, individual and women's rights, and social

protest movements against traditional institutions and centres of power. At the risk of generalizing, a kind of theoretical bias emerged towards news production constraints in the form of 'instrumental' political economic and institutional constraints.

The difference between these two sets of constraints (political economic and institutional) is that the former are inclined to address ideological issues of ownership and concentration of power whereas the latter tend to deal more with routine practice. In other words, political economic approaches look at issues of external power permeating news organizations, from the 'outside', so to speak, whereas institutional approaches attempt to produce a typology of professional everyday practice, such as the routine use of time. In contrast to earlier historical examples of participant observation and/or ethnography, the work in the 1970s typically took a sociological macro perspective, not concerned with micro issues such as agency. It followed two distinct trajectories: social organizational research addressed 'social construction' (Molotch and Lester, 1974) and organizational research examined issues of ownership and regulation (Epstein, 1973). Both these approaches were worthy efforts to examine the complexity of the newsmaking process without resorting to reductionist instrumental or agentive approaches.

Social constructionist and organizational approaches can be seen as lying at the two poles of the theoretical continuum, with individual agency at one end and political economic at the other. Epstein applied an organizational approach to American national television news and found that news output tended to be conservative and pro status quo on account of audience needs and economic interest. Molotch and Lester classified news stories according to whether they were planned or unplanned, routine, scandalous or accidental.

For Molotch and Lester, newspapers reflect not a world 'out there' but 'the practices of those who have the power to determine the experience of others' (1974: 101-112). Their important work on determining the experience of others is picked up in this thesis in terms of the power of elite British foreign correspondents to perform a similar function. Molotch and Lester's research seems to point towards some notion of power residing in media owners, editors as well as journalists, who have the power to create a particular form of reality, so possessing a certain degree of agency.

Much of the observational work conducted by sociologists on news as produced within organizations as a bureaucratic process drew on the classic investigations carried out by White and Breed. These scholars (Gans, Tuchman, Fishman, Gitlin, Epstein, Molotch and Lester, and Schudson) were exponents of communications research providing fresh insight by approaching news from the 'outside', social scientifically and objectively.

The late 1970s saw a new wave of newsroom ethnographies. Two of the most influential were Schlesinger (1978) and Golding and Elliott (1979). Schlesinger concluded from his research that BBC television news was pre-planned and time constrained. Golding and Elliott discovered that a range of international newsrooms produced news that was routine and manufactured. Schlesinger's work highlighted the importance of the industrial use of time in the form of routine professional newsmaking practice but not from the perspective of a journalist him/herself. In 1980, Mark Fishman conducted a piece of participant-observation research on local US newspapers which revealed that bureaucracy shaped journalistic views, so producing a conclusion that the more routine journalistic work is, the more instrumental it becomes, and the less individually agentic.

The 1980s saw something of a return to macro studies in the form of Herman and Chomsky (1994) and the Glasgow University Media Group, both of whom employed content analysis to arrive at the conclusion that American and British TV news were respectively inherently ideological in favour of imperialist elitist capitalism employing political economic propaganda and agenda-setting with a clear Western cultural bias, but still regarding the audience as essentially passive. In the 1980s, there was also an interesting study by Lichter et al. (1986), called *The Media Elite*. This surveyed 240 elite journalists and found that these journalists constituted a homogeneous liberal and cosmopolitan group which had an ambiguous relation with power; a fascination with but also a scepticism towards it. In psychological terms, they are characterized as narcissistic with a reduced capacity for intimacy – in other words, they lead a kind of 'insider's life with an outsider's self-image'. This seems to be a rare example, maybe the first since Molotch and Lester, of a piece of research that attempted to address notions of journalistic agency.

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